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Developments in the Linguistic Description of Indian English: State of the Art

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Abstract:

This article provides a survey of the developments that have taken place in the description of Indian English in the past two centuries, with particular attention to the phenomena of language (e.g. phonology, lexicogrammar, and pragmatics) that have been examined from a descriptive perspective. The evolution of English in India through centuries of use, first during the colonial period and then as the "associate official language" of independent India, stimulated the development of descriptions of all aspects of the language. However, the critical review in this article demonstrates that the linguistic descriptions except those in relation to society are scant and the often-made intuitive observation that Indian English is extensively studied does not apply to the description of linguistic phenomena. While providing lists of features based on impressionistic or small-scale data dominated the later part of the 20th century, the focus of current research has shifted to corpus-based and quantitative investigations. This article explores the systems of Indian English that have been studied in descriptive research, shows that the attitude towards linguistic descriptions is linked to the growth and use of English over time, and aims to stimulate further research by posing key questions that need to be answered.

KEYWORDS: INDIAN ENGLISH; PHONOLOGY; GRAMMAR; LEXIS; LEXICOGRAMMAR; PRAGMATICS

1 Introduction

One of the consequences of the colonial spread and expansion of the British empire has been the diffusion of the English language in socially, culturally, structurally, and even functionally transformed forms. The contact of English with the local vernaculars over four centuries led to the birth of new localised English varieties collectively called World Englishes (Schneider, 2007; Bolton and Kachru, 2006; Schneider, Burridge, Kortmann, Mesthrie and Upton, 2004; Kortmann, Burridge, Mesthrie, Schneider and Clive, 2004). By implication World Englishes refer to all English varieties of the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles (Kachru, 1985). In practice, however, this field has been and still is "more concerned with Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle varieties" (Schneider, 2006: 58), which have received increasing scholarly attention in the last half a century particularly in relation to their description. This attention has been even more widespread in the past three decades (Kachru, Kachru and Nelson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010).

Indian English (IndE) is one of the oldest of the new varieties of English with demographically the highest number of the users of English and therefore a centre of gravity in the field of World Englishes. The users of English in India outnumber any new variety by a significant margin, irrespective of the criteria of estimates applied (Crystal, 2008). The current status of English is of a second language, with the constitutional status as the "associate official language" of the Republic of India; English also exists as the first language of a fraction of Indian English speakers. And English is used in all key professional domains (Dua, 1996; Graddol, 2010). Therefore, IndE is an indispensable member of the new English varieties in any kind of debate that relates to World Englishes.

The use of English in the country for centuries has stimulated the description of almost all linguistic phenomena. However, it is the description of the language in relation to society (i.e. sociolinguistics) that received priority in the post-independence period of the last century; the linguistic description other than that in relation to society received much lesser attention. The extensive sociolinguistic descriptions raise the perception among some researchers that IndE "has been extensively studied" (Hosali, 2004: 1031), while many other researchers acknoweledge the extreme dearth of systematic linguistic descriptions of IndE (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998; D'souza, 2006; C Balasubramanian, 2009) .

The lack of systematic linguistic descriptions also leads to the perception of IndE as "a type of English that is characterized predominantly by errors" (cf. Sedlatschek, 2009: 26), at different levels (e.g. grammar, pronunciation and phraseology), which in turn gives birth to some unwelcome myths (D'souza, 2006). The conclusive remarks of Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998: 25) that "there is no comprehensive and integrated view of 'Indian English'" was inspired by such disparity in the descriptions of IndE. Krishnaswamy and Burde made their criticism one and a half decades ago, after which there have been some remarkable studies and subsequent publications in nearly all linguistic areas of IndE. An updated survey of the developments in the linguistic description of it is therefore imperative. Unfortunately, there is no such survey available. This paper aims to bridge this gap and provide an up-to-date critical survey of developments in the description of IndE, starting from the works undertaken in the colonial era. Along the survey the paper also seeks to stimulate further research by posing key questions that need to be answered.

2 Orientation

A close look at the descriptive endeavors in the context of IndE reveal clear links between the development of English in India and its the descriptions along the development. The descriptions have been motivated to meet the current need of the society.

The English language came to India in the early seventeenth century with British merchants, stayed and grew with Indian languages functioning alongside as a mediator in trade and administration and in the speech of the British, language translators and interpreters for centuries. The language was institutionalised as the language of education by the famous minute of Lord Macaulay in February 1835 (Evans, 2002) and eventually was accepted in the Indian constitution as an associate official language in 1950 after the independence of India (Dua, 1996; Mukherjee, 2010). Thus the growth of English passed through several phases at certain intervals, which are discussed at length in numerous published reports.

Likewise, the description of IndE underwent several phases in the past few centuries, with the distinct focus of attention in each phase. Though work of IndE began in 1788, the description of linguistic phenomena started in earnest in the post-independence period. Since independence, the list of publications has expanded in almost every (macro-) area of the language, e.g. phonology, phonetics, grammar, lexicon, and also the language in relation to society.

2.1 Descriptive phases

The linguistic studies of IndE exhibit three different attitudes in the pre- and post-independence periods, with clear focus of attention on lexicographic, sociolinguistic and other works. The three phases are described below.

Phase 1: 1788 –1947

The works carried out between this huge chunk of over one and a half centuries shows a common trait in regards to work on IndE and marks the first phase.[1] This phase begins with the compilation of *Indian Vocabulary, to which is prefixed the form of Impeachment* by Stockdale in 1788 (Kachru, 1994: 521) and includes the works produced in the pre-independence India. The focus was primarily on the register-specific vocabulary: compiling a list of words and phrases of Indian languages that had seeped into English by their extended use in India over years of colonization and had become part of the English language vocabulary, mainly in the English used by Indians, e.g. servants and clerks working for British officials, or by British officials for communicating with Indians (see e.g. Wilson, 1855; Yule and Burnell, 1886). The motivations for such works were primarily administrative and legal. Little was done on grammar in this period. In fact, there is no identifiable work on a grammatical aspect that is free of a lexicographic flavour. The only work in this phase that describes the grammar, to my knowledge, is Kindersley's (1938) notes on the stylistic and grammatical distinctiveness of the English used by educated Indians. A major portion of the work includes the list of Indian words used in the English of educated Indians.

Phase 2: 1947 – 1999

The second phase starts with the independence of India in 1947 and ends at the turn of the millennium. This phase comprising half a century began with Rao's (1954) description of "how and why Indian words were taken into English", a work tinged with the flavour of lexical studies somewhat similar to those of Phase 1, but this phase quickly took a new direction. The primary focus in this phase was sociolinguistic and nationalistic in orientation, with concentration on debating the status, roles and functions of English in India. The primary motivation was to demonstrate that IndE was a distinct variety in its own right, which, in fact, was an effort to overcome the stigmatic status of IndE of the colonial period.[2] Thus the tendency of the descriptive attempts was primarily "fragmentary", listing all possible phonological, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic features in one article. While the sociological and sociolinguistic studies and the study of the phonology of IndE are impressive in this

phase, grammatical descriptions received little attention. Those that discussed grammar seldom moved beyond features list.

Phase 3: 2000 –

The third and current phase began in 2000. The focus in general shifted from sociolinguistic to descriptive and from impressionistic to corpus-based.[3] Several descriptions devoted to individual aspects of IndE have appeared in the last decade. This phase is very much in its early stage, but based on the ratio of descriptive works in comparison with sociolinguistics or other areas, researchers seems to be more interested in the descriptions of linguistic phenomena. Four full-length volumes and a number of research papers devoted to individual topics on the description of different linguistic phenomena have been published in the form of journal articles and book chapters and a number of research projects on linguistic descriptions are being undertaken around the world.

Having established that there have been distinct approaches to description in the three phases outlined above, we now turn to evaluate the description of the linguistic phenomena that have been considered so far in the following sections.

3 Descriptive investigations

This section is devoted to the aspects of phonology, lexicogrammar, pragmatics, and discourse of IndE that have been considered for language description. Identifying the corresponding theoretical frameworks is beyond the scope of this article.

As for descriptive investigations of IndE, four works deserve special mention at the outset: Sailaja (2009), C. Balasubramanian (2009), Sedlatschek (2009), and Schilk (2011), the first three of which have the distinction of being the first full-length descriptions of the grammar of IndE and published in the same year. Sailaja's work reminds the readers of the approach adopted in the Phase 2. She presents a very brief overview, wherein she attempts to discusses almost everything – the history of English in India, phonology, morphosyntax, lexis and discourse of IndE. In brief, the book gently touches on every aspect of language at the macro-level; the result therefore is a very superficial overview. The other three works provide more detailed descriptions. C. Balasubramanian is the first and only accessible full-length work on register variation in IndE, while Sedlatschek is as yet the most comprehensive full-length description of what he calls Contemporary Indian English. In the most recent volume on grammar, Schilk (2011) has studied the lexicogrammar in relation to collocation and verb-complementation with particular focus on three ditransitive verbs – *give*, *send*, and *offer*.

3.1 Phonology

Features related to speech and pronunciation are easy to observe. And it is a general perception that the distinctiveness of IndE is amply manifested at the levels of phonology, as emphasised in the opening lines of Sahgal and Agnihotri (1988: 51): "Like other varieties of English, Indian English (IndE) too has its own flavour. More than any other level, it is the phonological level which distinguishes it from other varieties of English".

As a result, the phonology of IndE and the pronunciation of IndE speakers have attracted the interest of a large number of researchers working on the variety, particularly in the 1970s and also thereafter. Subsequently, the phonology of IndE is considered a well-explored area of the language. The general tendencies, however, have been to propose a handful of phonological features assumed to be representative of the variety, which in general is difficult to trust for the reasons explained in the forthcoming sections.

Phonological studies of various IndEs dominated in the 1970s and early 1980s. Throughout this period, besides presenting a list of features assumed to be representative of the varieties spoken in India, scholars also worked on the phonology of the regional varieties spoken within India, for example, Marathi English, Rajasthani English, and Tamil English. In what follows, I survey the research on the phonology of IndE in general (Section 3.1.1) as well as the phonology of Indian Englishes of different Indian regions (Section 3.1.2).

3.1.1 General Indian English

A few of the earliest and most popular works on phonology of what was labelled General Indian English were by CIEFL (1972), Bansal and Harrison (1972), and Bansal (1976, 1978). They all attempted to capture the features of General Indian English, although, as Agnihotri (1994: 237) notes, "[u]nfortunately, we have nothing comparable to, say, Gimson (1980) which may provide an exhaustive and authoritative account of Indian English".

A great deal of emphasis was given to the pronunciation of English (Nihalani, Tongue and Hosali, 1979; Nihalani, Tongue, Hosali and Crowther, 2004) and a great deal of time and labour in the English classroom in India was and still is devoted to learning the "correct" pronunciation of "standard" English, a fact that has always concerned the researchers working on English as a lingua franca (cf. Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011). As Sailaja (2009:17) rightly maintains, "teachers of IE [Indian English] pronunciation have usually imposed an unattainable standard from the purely pedagogical point of view – Received Pronunciation (RP), which is the standard British accent from southern Britain … Since English is taught as a second language in India, the issues of a standard for teaching has vexed and continues to vex classrooms."

In fact, students are taught in schools and private coaching classes the "correct" pronunciation of English words: how, for example, the interdental fricatives (/ð/ and /θ/) and glides (e.g., /ei/ and /əu/) should be pronounced to match the RP accent and they are told how the pronunciation of such sounds, for example, *thin* pronounced as /t^{h}in/ instead of /θin/, makes the speech sound un-English. Therefore, the phonology in IndE – on the whole articulatory (segmental) rather than prosodic phonology – has received considerable attention. Interestingly, however, most descriptions generally reach the same overgeneralization, characterizing a list of phonological features to represent IndE. This tendency is apparent in Gargesh (2006), who generalises a host of features as indicative of the phonology of Englishes of entire South Asia:

> The vowels, consonants, important phonological processes, and major prosodic features of English on the subcontinent … are to a great degree common to SAE [South Asian Englishes] (Gargesh, 2006: 102).

It should be noted that India is a very complex multilingual country, with a large number of indigenous languages (including the so-called dialects and mother tongues) from four language families: Indo-European (Indo-Aryan and Dardic), Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic (Munda and Mon-Khmer) and Sino-Tibetan (cf. Annamalai, 2006: 611). They have unique language-specific features. In light of the well-attested fact that the local vernaculars influence the local English, one would expect *at least* four sets of features to cover the phonology of Englishes spoken in India, let alone the entire South Asian region.[4] The English spoken by a Tamil L1 speaker, the English spoken by a Punjabi, and that by a Bihari L1 speaker are expected to have different sound inventories and stress and rhythmic patterns as the substrate languages are distinct, genetically affiliated to a distinct family, and have distinct linguistic properties. Pandey (1994: 202) also raised this point:

> In the case of Indian learners of English the reason for the polarization of conditions of words accent is all the greater because of the phonetic nature of accent in Indian languages, which form the substrata for English in India.

Rhoticity, the manifestation of post vocalic /r/ (as in /kar park/ "car park") or its deletion (as in /ka pak/ "car park") in pronunciation, in IndE has gained considerable attention. Research has demonstrated that rhoticity has strong correspondence with social factors in American English (Labov, 1966, 1972). This has been examined in the context of IndE suggesting that "IndE patterns are most strongly correlated with social features" (Chand, 2010: 5). This is manifest first in the works of Agnihotri and Sahgal (1985; Sahgal and Agnihotri, 1988) and more recently in Chand (2010) and a few other works (cf. Chand 2010: 4–8).

Agnihotri and Sahgal (1985; also see Sahgal and Agnihotri, 1988) have studied the word-final postvocalic coda /r/ in the speech of Hindi/English, Bengali/English and Tamil/English bilinguals from Delhi. They consider the sociolinguistic factors, including the informants' age, language background, and high school prestige and find that the speakers of older generation have more rhotic (r-full) pronunciation, while younger females with prestigious schooling have more non-rhotic (r-less) pronunciation. Chand (2010) examines a different data set and provides an update on the use of rhoticity in the speech of Hindi/English bilinguals from New Delhi. She notes that a host of social and linguistic factors (e.g. gender, age, occupation, ethno-linguistic identity, phonetic environment, morphemic independence, and syllable stress) contribute to rhotic behaviour in IndE and concludes that the behaviour of rhoticity in this variety "is clearly a complex phenomenon, given the number of significant factors, and the primacy of social factors" (2010: 19). The rhoticity in IndE has been studied in several other works. They are reviewed in Chand (2010). I therefore do not detail them here. However, as Chand (2010: 35–36) suggests, "more structural research is needed on this and other regional IndE dialects, to understand areas of convergence and divergence, and to counter sweeping pejorative generalizations of IndE".

3.1.2 Regional Indian English(es)

The study of regional IndEs started before the study of General Indian English by Bansal and his collaboration with Harrison began in the 1970s. The earliest study, to my knowledge, on any aspect of phonology, was by Kelkar (1957). Kelkar analysed the phonology of Marathi English as spoken in Maharastra, a western Indian province

where the dominant and first language of most speakers is Marathi. His data were based on "the Poona educated colloquial dialect" (p. 282). This study was published about one and a half decades before Bansal began working on General Indian English phonology. Another regional IndE variety described before General Indian English was the English spoken by a group of well-educated speakers from Uttar Pradesh by Bansal (1971-72) himself.

The works by Kelkar and Bansal in particular motivated researchers to study the phonology of other regional IndEs later on; as a result, several other linguists worked on Marathi English, e.g. Rubdy (1975) and Gokhale (1978), and several new and undescribed regional IndEs have been studied. They include Tamil English (Vijaykrishnan, 1978; T. Balasubramanian, 1972-73, 1975), Telugu English (Prabhakar Babu, 1974), Hindustani English (Pandey, 1980), Punjabi English (Sethi 1976, 1980), Rajasthani English (Dhamija, 1976), Malayalee English (Nair, 1996; Premlatha, 1978), and even based on particular dialects of L1, e.g. Tripura Bengali English (Das, 2001), i.e., the English spoken by Bengali L1 spekers in the north-eastern state of Tripura.[5] These works, however, are not always free from the psychological affinity to British RP as "underlying the effort to present the system of Indian English has been the wish to preserve the core system of nE [native English]", as Pandey (1994: 199) rightly remarked.

More recently, researchers have also begun to describe the phonology of English spoken by the speakers of multiple languages of one language family. Wiltshire (2005) has described the IndE spoken by the speakers of three Tibeto-Burman languages and makes significant observations. Her study reveals that the English of Tibeto-Burman speakers is phonologically distinct from General Indian English (CIEFL, 1972) in a number of respects, for example, "in terms of the presence of a [v]/[w] distinction, the lack of retroflexed consonants, final obstruent devoicing, simplification of consonant clusters, the presence of post-vocalic [r] and the reduction of vowel contrasts, in both quality and quantity" (2005: 296).[6] The study by Wiltshire (2005) not only expands the trend beyond the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages but also suggests that the English of a language family as substrate is bound to be a key factor when examining the nature, structure, and features of IndE(s). The pervasive trend so far has been of analyzing, describing and presenting the English spoken by the Indo-Aryan or Dravidian L1 speakers, as Wiltshire (2005: 275) rightly notes.

It is empirically proved that L2 English is influenced by the speaker's L1, and therefore we expect a number of varieties of English in India where the English speakers are of diverse L1 backgrounds and thus the phonological features of English spoken in one region differs from those of another. The absence of the fricative /ś/ (as in *sheet* and *push*) in the speech of certain Bihari speakers of English and the absence of alveolar fricative /s/ (and also schwa /ə/ in some cases) in the speech of many Bengali speakers of English are due to the phonological systems of the Bihari and Bengali languages, respectively. Several Bihari dialects do not have /ś/ [e.g. Bajjika: cf. Kashyap (Forthcoming)], while Bengali does not to have /s/ and /ə/ sounds (Cardona and Jain, 2003). Therefore, under L1 influence the respective Bihari dialects speakers replace the sound /ś/ with /s/ and many Bengali speakers replace the sounds /s/ with /ś/ in their speech of English.

Most if not all works in the area of phonology of IndE have focused on phoneme inventories, segmental and supra-segmental features, and word stress in General Indian English and regional varieties. While there exists a plethora of phonetic and phonological studies on IndEs, the lack of study on the intonation not only of IndEs

but also of indigenous Indian languages causes raised eyebrows. For this limitation, the study of phonology has been criticised, as can be seen in the following quote from Wiltshire: "There has not been extensive work on the intonation of General Indian English, nor much on individual Indian L1 languages either. Descriptions of IE [Indian English] intonation mention "faulty" divisions into tone groups, and "faulty" placements of the tones, with prescriptive suggestions for improvement" (Wiltshire, 2005: 296). A close examination of references on the intonation of IndE finds no more than a few master's and doctoral dissertations, e.g. Gokhale's (1978) work on the intonation of Marathi English, Latha's (1978) analysis of intonation in Malayalee English, Prabhakar Babu (1971) on Telugu English, and Murthy (1981) on Kannada English. Most master's and doctoral dissertations are unpublished. Therefore, for a researcher located outside India or (remotely) even within India accessing them is not an easy task.

4 Lexicogrammar: lexis and grammar

This section concentrates on studies on the lexicogrammr of IndE. The focus, in other words, will be on the studies that explore lexis and grammar. Note that the term lexicogrammar has theoretical implications in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) in which language is described at different strata, vis-à-vis, phonetics, phonology, lexicogrammar, and semantics in order of realization; and language is described in relation to context. The stratum of lexicogrammar refers to the contribution of both grammar (morphosyntax) and lexis combined in the construction of meaning and realises semantics, the stratum one level higher in order.

4.1 Lexis

The work on IndE began in the form of the compilation of dictionaries, the earliest being the compilation of *Indian Vocabulary, to which is prefixed the form of Impeachment* by Stockdale in 1788 (Kachru, 1994: 521), as noted earlier. Initially, the pragmatic motivations for exploring lexicon were administrative, judicial, and sociopolitical, for example, "to provide lexical manuals or handbooks for the large network of administrators in a linguistically complex and culturally pluralistic" society (Kachru, 1994: 521). Later on, in the post-1947 studies, lexical borrowings from Indian languages to English and their use by Indian speakers became the principal resource for identifying *Indianism* in IndE (see, e.g., Kachru 1965, 1983; Dubey, 1991; Bakshi, 1991).

As the purpose of compiling the glossaries and word lists in the colonial period was "to facilitate the comprehension of official documents by explanation of terms used in the Revenue department, or in other branches of Indian administration" (Yule and Burnell, 1886: xv), all such compilations were based on much restricted and carefully selected registers, notably those that closely related to administrative, judicial and socio-political spheres. Particularly notable among such works are those by Yule and Burnell (1886), Wilson (1855), Wilkins (1813), and Robarts (1800). Robarts's (1800) and Wilkins's (1813) works were significant in being the earliest glossaries (Yule and Burnell, 1886: xxiv), even if they are characterised as "amateurish … attempts at lexical listing" (Kachru, 1994: 521). Wilson's (1855) work is a more accessible compilation of *judicial and revenue terms and of useful words*

occurring in official documents, relating to the administration of the government of British India from many languages, e.g. Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, Persian, Oriya, Gujarati, Telugu. This glossary, as Yule and Burnell (1886: xv) review, "leaves far behind every other attempt in that kind'. Yule and Burnell are the most accessible of all in their efforts to compile Anglo-Indian words and phrases.

The lexical explorations in the post-1947 period changed in their motivation and have been confined to certain registers, e.g. novels written in English by an Indian native or newspaper texts with focus on "its formal deviance [from British English] rather than the functional value of its lexical structures" (Dubey, 1991: 19). Kachru's major works, e.g. Kachru (1965, 1983), took this approach and used illustrations from creative writings by Indians writers. An example of the study of selected lexicon is by Dubey (1991), who adopted a functional approach and studied newspaper lexis with attention on three registers: exploring (editorials, letters to editor), reporting (news stories), and recommending (matrimonial advertisement).[7] The main focus, however, was on the matrimonial advertisement, a recommending text-type, where he makes very useful observations and shows how a set of words have acquired semantic shifts in IndE.

4.2 Grammar

Grammatical descriptions of IndE are scant. Most grammatical attempts in Phase 2 adopted a features-list approach, as noted earlier. They attempted to provide a collection of features from all strata of the language, were either impressionistic or based on some small-scale unsystematic data (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998). That trend continued till before the beginning of the current century (see, e.g., Verma 1982; Parasher, 1983, 1994; Jacob, 1998). These works, useful as they are, leave immense scope for further descriptive research.

The last decade has witnessed the beginning of richer linguistic descriptions and a remarkable shift from the features-list approach to more detailed description. Yet, one important trend that prominently emerges in the current phase is prioritizing quantitative description over qualitative. As demonstrated below, a large proportion of research in Phase 3 has focused on profiling the frequency of occurrences of features of IndE in comparison with other Englishes. Surprisingly, this is done without describing in detail what the features in question mean in IndE. Ironically, the description of the features used for comparison is mostly in the context of British English, usually Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) or some other description of British English.

The areas of grammar studied in IndE include verbs, articles, tags, and focus particles, which the following sub-sections survey. A few stylistic and other grammatical features, e.g. fixed expressions that are discussed in the studies that provide general feature lists (e.g. Parasher, 1994) will not be considered here as they lack strong empirical support. Those aspects of grammar that have been empirically explored in detail, either qualitatively or quantitatively, will be the focus of attention.

4.2.1 Verbs

A number of well-known features of IndE that have often been discussed in the fragmentary features-list approach come from the use of verbs. For example using

standard transitive verbs intransitively, example (1), is often found in the case of many verbs in IndE, e.g., in the case of *give, avail, request,* and *appreciate* (Parasher 1994: 150). The use of reflexive with certain verbs, (2), has become a (standard) norm in IndE, where a native English speaker generally does not prefer the use of reflexive, or the use of the modal *would* in some contexts, for example in (3) and (4), where a native speaker uses *will*.

(1). We would appreciate if you could … (Parasher 1994: 150)
(2). I would like Dr X to associate himself with this project. (Parasher 1994: 151)
(3). I would not be able to revise the draft (Parasher 1994: 151)
(4). Business without planning would not bring desired effects or would not achieve the objectives of a business in fairly manner. (ICE-IND:W1A-016)

However, empirical qualitative studies devoted to verbs in IndE are very limited. Most studies in the last ten years have focused on register-specific frequency counts.

A particular aspect of IndE verbs – verb complementation – has received much attention in the recent years (Mukherjee and Hoffmann, 2006; Hoffmann and Mukherjee, 2007; Mukherjee, 2010; Hoffmann, Hundt and Mukherjee, 2011; Olavarría de Ersson and Shaw, 2003). This aspect of verbs in IndE did not receive due attention in the past. The only notable study on this topic was Leitner (1994).

A common feature of the recent works on verb complementation is that they all present a quantitative frequency profile of the usage of a group of (di)transitive verbs in IndE and their relative frequency with a native English. They are mostly centrally based on International Corpus of English, plus a complementary corpus that the investigators have compiled themselves.

Olavarría de Ersson and Shaw (2003) extend Nihalani, Tongue and Hosali's (1979) work on the four transitive verbs – *provide, furnish, supply* and *present* – by adding a set of another five verbs (*entrust, pelt, shower, pepper,* and *bombard*) of the category also known as "ditransitive complementation" (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvi, 1985) and provide their relative frequency with British English. Hoffmann, Hundt and Mukherjee (2011) explore another type of verb typical of the languages of India as a linguistic area (Abbi, 1994): "the light-verb constructions (LVCs) such as *have a look*, i.e. constructions that combine a semantically empty 'light' verb (e.g. *have*)". The study is in the process of the authors' search if "IndE is indeed an emergent epicenter" in the South Asian region (p.260). Thus the goal is sociolinguistic and as a result the outcome revolves around the frequency profile of usage in a few carefully selected newspapers of the subcontinent. Schneider (2004), in another quantitative work on verbs, examines the frequency of occurrences of intransitive particle verbs, traditionally known as the phrasal verbs (e.g. *drop out, turn up,* and *look at*), in six World Englishes of which IndE is one; the other five include Englishes of East Africa, Great Britain, the Philippines, and Singapore.

The verb is the locus for realizing a number of lexicogrammatical features, two of which, the systems of TENSE and ASPECT, are the most salient as they locate our activities and our experiences of different activities in relation to time. Despite this significance, the description of these grammatical phenomena in IndE is little . The notable studies of the use tense in Indian English is by Sharma (2001) and Agnihotri, Khanna and Mukherjee (1980, 1988).

The use of past perfect for simple past and present perfect tense is attested in some Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages (cf. Sridhar, 1990). This character of some substrate languages influence the ambiguous use of the past perfect tense for simple past and present present tense. This is what Sharma (2001) concentrated on in

remarkable her study of the use pluperfect in IndE and compared its use in the selected registers of IndE, British English, and American English to draw the statistical patters of use.

The studies conducted by Agnihotri et al. (1980, 1988) in the 1980s were motivated primarily by pedagogical concerns. The authors adopted a sociolinguistic approach (questionnaire-based method) and studied the use of tense in the English used by a group of first year undergraduate students in New Delhi. The focus was on examining if "sex differences would be reflected in linguistic achievement." The informants were given a list of sentences with a blank space and verbs in uninflected forms, each to be completed with an appropriate form of the verb without using modals. The response was gathered from informants of various backgrounds including, e.g., sex, education (privately owned English medium vs. vernacular medium public/private schools), socio-economic status (higher, upper-middle, or middle), and residence (rural, semi-urban, or urban). This findings of Agnihotri et al.'s (1980) research allowed them to make valuable recommendations for improving the teaching of English in India. The study however did not have a descriptive flavor per se, primarily because they were confined to pedagogical concerns; the analysis and the subsequent findings therefore were divorced from the meaning of tense in IndE. It was a survey of 356 students in order to identify errors concerning the use of tense in their English. The studies presupposed the existence of a standard English and the students had to meet the rules of that English to obtain a high success score in the questionnaire.

4.2.2 Articles

The absence of articles in Indian languages leaves impact on the ambiguous use of the articles or their absence in IndE. In addition to the discussion in the features-list approach discussed above of how erroneous the use of articles can be, there are three studies devoted to the use of articles in IndE: Sand (2004), Agnihotri (1992) and Agnihotri et al. (1994). Sand's (2004) study on the use of articles, both definite *the* and indefinite *a/an*, in a range of Englishes includes IndE. Like Agnihotri (1992) and Agnihotri et al. (1994), she identified differences in the use of definite articles compared to standard British or American English, the source of which is the absence of an article in substrate languages (Sand, 2004: 286), a characteristic well-identified across New Englishes.

In line with most of Agnihotri's works on IndE, Agnihotri (1992) and Agnihotri et al. (1994) are concerned with the pedagogical purposes oriented towards error analysis: they analyse students' errors in the use of articles and make recommendations in order to improve the students' understanding of these grammatical items and their usage.

4.2.3 Tags

Following the use of invariant tags in Indian substrate languages, the invariant tags (e.g. *isn't it*, *no* and *na*) in Indian English has become a nativised feature. Though a number of works, typically the works of general syntactic features, make reference to invariant tags in IndE, the only studies dedicated to this phenomenon are by

Columbus (2009, 2010). Columbus provides the relative frequency of the occurrences of utterance-final invariant tags in five English varieties: Indian, British, New Zealand, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

A qualitative account of IndE tags is yet to appear. Columbus's treatment of invariant tags in IndE raises several concerns in that the author seems to have mixed several issues and attributed them to tag, e.g. the use of *acchā*, a particle that is usually a continuative or interpersonal component of Theme in a Hindi clause (Kumar, 2009). Columbus's works, notwithstanding, are the only dedicated studies on the use of tags in IndE and a reference point for further studies.

4.2.4 Focus particles

IndE substrates are well known for using focus particles for discourse purposes (see, e.g., Y. Kachru, 1980; Pandharipande, 1997). Hindi, for example, uses several particles including *hī*, *to* and *bhī*. The innovative use of focus particles, for example, *also*, *only* and *itself*, e.g. in (5) and (6), in IndE following the substrate languages is acknowledged in several studies (e.g. Bhatt, 2000; Sridhar, 1996).

(5) And how is that you came to be a professor only – a lecturer in English? (ICE-IND:S1A-075)

(6) They could not get accommodation in the nearby Tourist Corporation Hotel which had been booked heavily last night itself. (KCIE)

Lange (2007) provides a qualitative account of the use of *only* and *itself* as focus markers in IndE. The qualitative description is complemented with quantitative data from two corpora. The study is significant not only because it provides a qualitative analysis supported with quantitative data but also because it raises several empirical questions.

> The difference to other varieties is definitely qualitative rather than merely quantitative. For linguists, then presentational *only/itself* counts as an example of "indigenization of language structure" … but what is the status of this in the IE [Indian English] speech community? Will the innovation eventually become part of an IE standard, whether spoken or written? And finally, will the innovative usage affect the overall structure of the language/variety, or more precisely: Will the new use act as a trigger for a general restructuring of focus marking strategies in IE? At this stage, all answers are necessarily tentative and should rather be taken as suggestions for further research (Lange, 2007: 113).

Lange has shown in her study that "substrate influence accounts for the IE [Indian English] preference to place markers after their foci as well as innovative usage of *only/itself* as non-contrastive focus markers" (p. 114) and that the latter is "surely a (morpho-)syntactic feature that is absent from other varieties of English" (p. 194). Her findings are in disagreement with earlier works that, to a surprising to many, claimed that there is "no syntactic features that may be said to be uniquely associated with Indian English" (Agnihotri, 1999: 193). In Lange's opinion the innovative use of *only* and *itself* as the focus markers "appears to be the first candidate for a nativized syntactic pattern" in IndE. Lange's work is as yet the most informative analysis of the use of *only* and *itself* in IndE and an indispensable point of reference for further research on this topic, for the least to say.

In a notable study, Valentine (1991) examined the discourse markers in the speech of educated female IndE speakers in a range of formal and informal settings. Valentine studied a number of issues that shade into pragmatics, the area that we turn to in the following section, e.g. "in terms of pragmatics, what marks these Indian English texts as *discoursal texts*", meaning thereby "the interactional features or discourse markers which typify these exchanges a spoken discourse of English" (1991: 326; *italics* original).

4.3 Pragmatics

Works on the pragmatics of IndE began in 1978 (Subrahmanian, 1978), a period when research on phonology was on fast-track and grammatical descriptions were beginning to take off. Though research on pragmatics has not been a preferred choice in IndE, research on relevant issues has crept in from time to time: e.g., Leitner (1983) on ethnography of speaking, Pandharipande (1992) and Mehrotra (1995) on politeness, Yamuna Kachru (1991), and Tinkham (1993) on speech acts. These works are often overlooked in the literature of World Englishes. The earliest reference, for example, in Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey's (2011) two and a half-page survey on the pragmatics research (section 2.1.3) on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) dates from 1996. They write:

> *The beginnings of research into ELF pragmatics* (Firth 1996 …) pointed to mutual cooperation as a major characteristic of ELF communication, along with a strong orientation towards securing mutual understanding regardless of 'correctness' for instances by employing 'let it pass' and 'making it normal' strategies (Firth 1996)' (Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011: 293; *emphasis* added).

As the references show, the pragmatics works on IndE certainly dates from earlier than 1996. Besides, some pragmatic aspects are dealt with in several of Braj Kachru's works published in the 1960s onwards, even if they are primarily intended to address the issues of sociolinguistics and Indianism.

Pragmatics is very closely related to the cultural affiliation of a speech community. Indian and Western cultures are very different, and therefore, how social realities are represented in IndE is expected to differ from other Englishes, often leading to miscommunication to English usage in the Inner-Circle variety (cf. Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts, 1979). The research in the area of pragmatics in IndE has therefore focused on disambiguating the socio-cultural distinctiveness and primarily on explaining how cultural norms are represented in that variety of English. A great deal of emphasis has been laid on explaining how politeness is enacted in IndE (Mehrotra, 1995; Pandharipande, 1992).

In the process of explaining the enactment of politeness, factors like terms of address and reference, verbalization of gratitude, status distancing, and collocation are considered. Subrahmanian (1978) explains how the utterances like "my wife" can be an instance of impolite behavior in some contexts; the expressions like *My Mrs. is Indian* rather than *My wife is Indian* is appropriate in the context of IndE. Mehrotra (1995) deals with the terms of address, verbalization of gratitude, and strategies for status distancing in IndE context. Pandharipande (1992), yet another reference for politeness in IndE, argues that

> the choice of the Indian or Indianized strategies of politeness is determined by overall constraints of appropriateness, which is called *maryada* (literally 'limitation' or 'constraint') in the Indian cultural context in general and in different (Indian) speech communities in particular. Thus the choice of certain linguistic strategies in IE [Indian English] is not optional but obligatory, and failure to use those markers/strategies results in an inappropriate/impolite utterance.

This was convincingly illustrated in Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) while they explained the communication conflicts and miscommunication because of cultural differences.

Leitner (1983) adopted a conversation analysis approach and re-analysed in his critique to Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) the interview of Indian immigrants by "white Britons" from a BBC TV programme *Crosstalk*, which formed the basis of several remarkable works by Gumperz and his colleagues, including Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979). Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts claimed that "interethnic miscommunication is often the result of nonshared social knowledge about the norms of interaction in particular settings even if all participants use English as a medium of communication" (Leitner, 1983: 153). The interviewees were Asian immigrants to Britain, who also included Indian immigrants. Gumperz's analysis concluded that IndE was "systematically different [from British English] not only in the social knowledge their speakers use as bases for conversational strategies, but also in conventions and principles which guide how a conversational intention will be signaled in speech" (quoted in Leitner, 1983: 153).

It has been observed that New Englishes differ from the native English "in the performance of speech acts more than in formal properties" and that "a pragmatic approach may succeed in capturing the uniqueness of NNVE [non-native variety of English] where structural analyses fail to do so" (Sridhar, 1991: 308). D'souza (1991) and Tinkham (1993) pick up this point and empirically investigate the IndE discourse. The studies examine the verbal behaviours of characters in creative fiction written by IndE creative writers with attention to a range of verbal and non-verbal features, including theme and topic, scene and settings, characters, terms of address, and speech acts, e.g., request, directive, invitation, offer, and apology.

Elements such as continuative, conjunction, conjunctive adjunct (also called "discourse adjunct"), and modal adjuncts, are part of what is known as the textual metafunction in SFL – the organization and flow of messages in text (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), have very significant textual and interpersonal roles to play in the construction of text.[8] A continuative signals "a move in the discourse: a response in dialogue, or a new move to the next point if the same speaker in continuing". A conjunction either links or binds the clause to another clause. Conjunctive adjuncts "relate the clause to the preceding text" roughly covering "the same semantic space as conjunctions", while modal adjuncts "express the speaker or writer's judgment on or attitude to the content of the message" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 81). This is the areas where IndE is expected to have distinctive characters, as Leitner noted: "There is an increasing number of studies which claim that Indian English is a separate local variety of English … and that the major differences from 'Western English' reside in its *pragmatics* or *discoursal* features" (1983: 162; *emphasis* added).

This point was raised about 30 years ago, initially by Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) and later by Leitner (1983), but this aspect of IndE still remains largely unexplored, with exception of a couple of occasional papers, e.g. by Valentine (1991).

Valentine examined the use of a set of discourse features, – conjunctions and continuatives (e.g. *and, but, or, then*, *well, because, so*) and modal adjuncts (*you know, I mean, I think, I don't know*) - in the spoken conversation of diverse groups of bilingual educated female IndE speakers between 21-year old college students and 60-year old working ladies and housewives and in a range of formal and informal settings. The study revealed that these textual and interpersonal markers in IndE texts that she examined "take on a more complex function. They contribute to the structure of the text in that they indicate something about the commitment and confidence that the users has towards what she is saying and demonstrate the involvement and interpersonal speaker–hearer relationship" (1991: 329). The textual area of grammar in IndE is extremely under-researched and therefore needs due attention.

5 Conclusion

This article has provided a survey of developments in the description of linguistic phenomena of IndE. The survey indicates that the description of IndE is still in its infancy and the often-made intuitive remarks that IndE has been extensively studied does not apply to the studies of linguistic systems (e.g. phonology, lexicogrammar, and pragmatics). While the articulatory (segmental) phonology has received significant attention, the prosodic phonology has been largely ignored. Most works in Phase 2 were replications of earlier findings. Despite the plethora of research outputs, and the remarkable shift of attention from the description in relation to society to the description of linguistic phenomena and from impressionistic to corpus-based in the past one decade, the areas of grammar that those research outputs cover are very limited.

In the past century, the discussion on Indianism in IndE, providing a cross-stratal list of features were a linguistic fashion; in the current century, as evidenced in the research so far, that gravity has shifted to quantitative research. The feature-list studies presented in Phase 2 are useful for identifying the aspects that are distinctive and have different linguistic properties in comparison with other Englishes. They cannot (and should not) be treated as exhaustive descriptive treatments of the aspects in question. In my opinion, those studies represent the first step towards in-depth qualitative research and for modelling the style of meaning typical of IndE.

Mauranen (2010) in her study on the metadiscourse in spoken Academic English as Lingua Franca suggests that "[t]o understand academic speaking it is necessary to rid ourselves of the baggage of native English practices" (2010: 15). Clearly, the researchers of IndE have not rid themselves of the *baggage of native English practices*: the descriptive attempts in IndE are still preoccupied with the British standard. An analysis of IndE usage without reference to native usage is rare. The key focus throughout has been to show that "IndE differs systematically from British English, the historical input" (Hoffmann et al., 2011) and to what degree it does so.

At this point we could ask what picture would emerge if we described IndE (or any New English for that matter) without the conception of the British (or American) English norms. To be more precise, can we describe IndE as a language in its own right without thinking of a native English? If so, then what will the description inform? Addressing such questions, in my opinion, will entail providing a new kind of description, different from what is available at present.

Another question to consider in the light of major developments that took place in relation to linguistic descriptions of IndE is: which aspects and what kind of research

should receive attention at this stage? The list is too long to accommodate here. However, to say the least, more qualitative research on linguistic systems of IndE is required. Providing the relative frequency counts of a grammatical feature is certainly useful, and very significant aspect of description. In fact, both quantitative and qualitative analyses are related; but in my opinion, quantitative research should not precede the qualitative research, rather it should follow the qualitative research or go along with it. If we interpret the system of a language as probabilistic in nature, then the qualitative and the quantitative investigations should complement each other, proceeding together, as illustrated by Matthiessen (1999, 2006b) in reference to PROCESS TYPE. Mere quantitative frequency counts of a feature without having described the qualitative nature of that feature are inadequate.

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Notes

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[1] Note that this division of timeline is not based on historical events that we find in available works on the development and spread of English in this region.

[2] See Parasher (1991) for the discussion on the "stigmatic" view on the English used by Indians in colonial period.

[3] It is important to note, however, that the process of systematically compiling a substantial corpus of IndE began in Phase 2 by Shastri (1988). Shastri's corpus, known as Kolhapur Corpus of India English (KCIE) became part of the Indian component of International Corpus of English (ICE-IND).

[4] See Wiltshire (2005) on the phonology of Tibeto-Burman languages speakers' IndE for an example.

[5] Bengali is the official state language of the two states: West Bengal and Tripura.

[6] Compare the finding of Wiltshire (2005) with Gargesh's (2006) generalisation discussed above.

[7] Exploring, reporting, and recommending are the text-types in register typology (within SFL) according to the socio-semiotic activities that they engage in (see Matthiessen 2006a).

[8] Modal adjuncts operate within the interpersonal metafunction rather than within the textual one, but they also interact with the textual components in the construction of text (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: Chapter 3).

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