

YA GOVT. DEGREE COLLEGE (W), CHIRALA, PRAKASAM (Dist)
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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Particulars of the presenters

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Introduction:

India is a multi-lingual country. People in India speak many languages. There are oral languages and also written languages. Barring oral languages, no two languages are alike. People have their own pronunciation systems. They speak their language in their own way. Hence either grammatical or pronunciation systems may affect their learning of foreign languages like English.

It happens so, when they are using English as medium of communication. No doubt English is new to them, but most people use it as per their own convenience. While they are using English for communication, their mother tongue will have an influence on English.

Most people try to think first in their mother tongue at the time of communication, and then translate their ideas into English. Hence certain errors occur.

For example, people in India say: “**I am suffering with fever**”. The native English speakers say: “**I am suffering from fever**” because for them ‘suffer from’ is a phrase. Such phrases are to be learnt and used carefully.

What are Indianisms?

Indianisms are certain **grammatical errors** which the speakers of English in India commit. These errors look very natural. They occur, as mentioned earlier, mostly because the Indian English speakers think first in their mother tongue and then later translate their thoughts in to English.

Objectives of study:

We are the non native speakers of English. We respect our mother tongue. We learn it and use it very cautiously. In the same way we have to learn any language and use it. We have a three language formula proposed by the government of India which is being implemented for a long time. We have to learn our mother tongue (as the first language), the national language (Hindi-as second language) and the official language (English-as third language). So we have to learn English as the native speakers of English learn it and use it.

The objectives of the study of Indianisms are as follows:

1. *To list out* some of the most common grammatical errors committed by Indian speakers,
2. *To note down* the reasons why these errors occur,
3. *To suggest* learners of English to be aware of such errors,
4. *To learn English* as the native speakers of English learn it

Methodology:

The study of Indianisms is quite useful for any learner of English for functional (communicative) use. Identification of such errors is to be done through

- i. Observation of people speaking English,
- ii. Referring to certain standard books of English usage,
- iii. Browsing the internet,
- iv. Reading articles on spoken and functional English being published in newspapers etc

List of some selected Indianisms and their corrected forms:

Indianisms	Corrected forms
Me and Rajesh	Rajesh and I
“Don’t start a sentence with ‘me’ as the subject, because the word ‘me’ is the object form of ‘I’. Similarly when ‘I’ is used with ‘third/second’ person in the subject, it should follow respective.	
I will return these books back to you tonight	I will return these books to you tonight
The verb ‘return’ means ‘give back/come back’. Hence it is unnecessary to use the preposition ‘back’ with ‘return’.	
I had an operation some time back	I underwent an operation some time back
‘undergo operation’ is the correct usage, ‘have an operation’ is vague	
We did not understood his speech	We did not understand his speech
Most Indians do not use ‘do’ forms correctly in any tense. ‘do/does/did not + V1’ is the correct form	
She is knowing my name pretty well	She knows my name pretty well
This is a very common Indianism. Verbs like ‘know, love, understand, belong, own, remember’ are normally not to be used in continuous tense.	
Sorry, I beg your pardon	Sorry/I beg your pardon
Expressions like ‘sorry’ and ‘I beg your pardon’ mean the same. Hence they are not supposed to be used together	
Myself did this work	I did this work.
Emphatic pronouns like ‘myself/ourselves/yourself/yourselves/himself/herself/itself/themselves’ are not to be used as the subject in the sentences.	
I have a terrific headache	I have a terrible headache
‘terrible’ means ‘horrible/unbearable’, ‘terrific’ means ‘something that creates terror’	
He is a nice person, isn’t it?	He is a nice person, isn’t he?
“Isn’t it” is commonly used as a question tag in India. Appropriate tag is to be used	
He will come back in two three days	He will come back in a couple of days
	He will come back in two or three days
‘Two three days’ is a common usage in Indian languages.	
This elephant is too big	This elephant is very/quite big
“too/so big” means something that is ‘unimaginably big’	
Her would-be is working in Bangalore	Her fiancée is working in Bangalore
The expression does not always suggest ‘spouse (husband/wife)’	
My cousin brother is in Chennai	My cousin is in Chennai
The word ‘cousin’ is in common gender i.e. it can be either male or female	
There are ten females in the bus	There are ten women in the bus
Use ‘women/ladies/girls’ in the place of ‘females’. ‘Female’ indicates ‘gender (sex)’ only.	
I have many works to attend to	I have a lot of work to attend to
‘work’ is an uncountable noun, hence there would be no plural for it	
What is your good name? (or) Your good name please.	Your name please. (or) Could you please tell me your name?
No name is either ‘good’ or ‘bad’	
Put a mail to me immediately	Send me a mail immediately
Will I go now?	Shall/can I go now?
‘will’ + ‘we/I’ is an incorrect usage	
He don’t know my name	He doesn’t know my name
Pronouns like ‘he/she/it’ or any name take ‘does’ to make a negative in the present tense	
We discussed about his conduct very seriously	We discussed his conduct very seriously
The verb ‘discuss’ itself means ‘talk about’, hence the preposition ‘about’ is unnecessary with ‘discuss’	

Suppose if I start this work now I can finish it early	If I start this work now I can finish it early
	Suppose I start this work now I can finish it early
‘suppose’ and ‘if’ mean the same	
Although I worked hard but I failed to get good marks	I worked hard but I failed to get good marks
	Although I worked hard I failed to get good marks
Both the conjunctions ‘although’ and ‘but’ mean the same, hence one conjunction is enough in a sentence	
As it was raining so they kept indoors	As it was raining they kept indoors
	It was raining so they kept indoors
Both the conjunctions ‘as’ and ‘so’ mean the same, hence one conjunction is enough in a sentence	
The teacher let the boys to go	The teacher let the boys go
The verb ‘let’ is not to be followed by ‘to +V1’	
She is watching the movie since the morning	She has been watching the movie since the morning
When a past action is said to be continuing in the present time use ‘has/have been + V1 +ing’	
The boys are playing cricket for two hours	The boys have been playing cricket for two hours
When a past action is said to be continuing in the present time use ‘has/have been + V1 +ing’	
We have been learning English from three months	We have been learning English for three months
Don’t use a preposition like ‘from’ when a past action is said to be continuing in the present time. Use ‘since’ or ‘for’	
Unless you don’t know about it don’t argue with me	Unless you know about it don’t argue with me
	If you don’t know about it don’t argue with me
The conjunction ‘unless’ means ‘if + not’	
Please meet me at the office at 10am sharply	Please meet me at the office at 10am sharp
Do some work at a point of time sharply is an Indian expression	
As soon as he started the work immediately I stopped him	As soon as he started the work I stopped him
	He started the work immediately I stopped him
‘as soon as’ itself means ‘immediately’	
He is awaiting for his father anxiously	He is waiting for his father anxiously
	He is awaiting his father anxiously
The verb ‘await’ means ‘wait for’ and so there is no need to use ‘for’ again with ‘await’	
She is good in mathematics	She is good at mathematics
‘good at’ means ‘expert in’	
He will come back in two and half hours	He will come back in two hours and a half
	He will come back in two and a half hours
‘two and a half’ is plural	
I bought two dozens apples	I bought two dozen apples
	I bought two dozens of apples
‘two dozens’ is an Indianism	
I cannot carry these luggages	I cannot carry this luggage
Words like ‘luggage, machinery, equipment, scenery, poetry’ are uncountable, hence they are in singular number only	
One of my friend lives in Hyderabad	One of my friends lives in Hyderabad
The phrase ‘one of ‘ should always follow a plural noun	

OBSERVATIONS:

It is learnt that most Indians commit several such errors in their communication. It is not is easy for them to get over the errors. It is also understood that these basic errors have been with the Indians since they have started learning English. Hence they continue to exist in the communication.

Most people argue that it is not the grammar that they ought to learn but how to communicate. It is correct. Communication is more important than grammar. Communication is meant for understanding of what one speaks. As long as one’s speech is understood there will be no problem.

This will be acceptable as long as we live in India and as long as we communicate with fellow Indians. If we go abroad for employment or for a trip on business or vocation, we are supposed to talk to English speaking people. Hence we have to correct ourselves as far as possible.

Hence let us not learn English only for communication sake. Let us develop fluency along with accuracy of language.

Bibliography:

1. Internet sources
2. Dept. of English, YA Govt. Degree College (W), Chirala

Signature of supervising teacher