

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SYNTACTICAL TENSE/ASPECT  
FEATURES OF INDIAN WORLD ENGLISH:  
The Simple Present Tense

by

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University  
Saint Paul, Minnesota  
May 2004

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*To my family: Steve, Lisa and David.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the staff at Ramsgate Apartments in Hopkins, Minnesota for allowing me to conduct my research on site.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Within adult and college ESL classes today there is a group of learners who should be given careful consideration since they differ fundamentally from others. These learners speak various 'nativized' Englishes which are in effect, second language varieties of English. One of these nativized varieties is Indian English, spoken by students from India. Unlike students from other countries, Indian students come already 'fluent' in English. Their form of English, however, contains many non-standard features which could be marked as mistakes in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Some of these non-standard features are grammatically syntactic in nature, often concerning issues of tense and aspect. One of the non-standard tense/aspect features noticeable to English native speakers is the expression of the simple present tense. Indian English speakers often use the present progressive instead of the simple present for habits and states, and sometimes will substitute the *used to* construction for habits. When an Indian English speaker uses these forms in the U.S., the listener is momentarily distracted by the non-standard form and is struck by how 'foreign' the speaker sounds. The purpose of this paper is to study the pervasiveness of and the potential factors influencing the non-standard manifestations of the simple present tense of Indian English in oral production in order to understand how to best approach instruction.

I first became interested in Indian English a few years ago when I was involved in an outreach teaching assignment for my Adult Basic Education Consortium. The assignment was to teach a 16-week ESL class onsite for a group of Indian women living

in the same apartment complex. They had all signed up for English classes, and yet they already knew English; they had graduated from English-medium universities. Although proficient in English, they still had areas which needed improvement – pronunciation and oral fluency in particular. As we worked on these areas, I noticed several unusual verb forms being used. After a few weeks, I realized that most of the students were making the same ‘mistakes.’ These mistakes were minor but strange. Of particular interest to me was their expression of the simple present. They seemed to use various verb forms indiscriminately where native speakers would use the simple present. The most common non-standard form was the use of present progressive for simple present such as: *I am watching TV every afternoon. I am having a work visa now.* Occasionally, the habitual present would be expressed with *used to*: *I used to cook every night* (present habit). As a listener, I paused and thought, “Why did she say it that way? If she graduated from an English-medium university, why is she talking like this?”. This was my initial burning question. I wondered how I would correct errors made by ‘fluent’ English speakers without offending them.

Indian speakers of English may not be aware that they are speaking a variety of English different from Standard British or North American English (SBE/NAE). They may think that their errors are individual rather than systemic. Although Indian English is an acceptable variety of English, a student enrolled in an ESL class should know that SBE/NAE differs from Indian English in some ways. One can assume that students who understand the non-standard features of their English variety can more easily attain

proficiency in SBE/NAE. Also, students who want to have more 'native-like' speech can benefit from this awareness.

In the future, ESL professionals will encounter more and more students who speak indigenized varieties of English. Indian immigration levels are rising as globalization becomes a reality. Students from countries like Liberia also speak an indigenized variety of English. Because these students have already acquired a different variety of English, their needs are different from those of other students learning English. Teachers need to be aware of the differences and adapt instruction accordingly. They must do this while acknowledging the value of the indigenized variety of English spoken by their students.

In order to gather relevant data to inform instruction for Indian students, my research question was defined further: How pervasive are the non-standard oral expressions of the simple present tense? To what extent do the speakers use the simple present tense form? Is there a difference between expressing states and habits? These questions formed the basis for my primary research in which a small group of Indian English speakers participated in an audio-taped speaking task which targeted stative and habitual verbs. Present tense verbs were transcribed and categorized according to type and form. Information gained from a background questionnaire was integrated to determine possible influences. This data was augmented by information gained in a group debriefing discussion. It is important to note that the results apply only to the specific research group and cannot be generalized. Yet, information gained in this study increases awareness of features and factors influencing Indian World English.

Students from India come to ESL classes speaking Indian English, a nativized variety of English, with non-standard tense/aspect features. It is beneficial to the student as well the instructor to understand the nature of Indian English and factors influencing its features. These issues are explored in Chapter Two, the Literature Review, which follows. The Literature Review provides background information on the role English has played and continues to play in Indian society. Indian English as a nativized variety is then examined in terms of second language acquisition and tense/aspect features.

Although much research has been done on defining grammatical features of Indian English, little research has been done on the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the simple present tense in oral production. It is this issue in particular that forms the basis for my primary research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

In effort to study the non-standard expression of the simple present tense by speakers of Indian English, one must understand English in India. Background information on the culture and indigenous languages is crucial to understanding the environment in which the English language has permeated the subcontinent. The non-standard features of Indian English have developed as a result of nativization of the language and are not exhibited uniformly. There are several versions of Indian English spoken which fall along a spectrum – from pidgin at one end to SBE at the other end. This nativized variety of English has been influenced by a combination of factors including first language transfer, context for use, and educational practices. Indian English differs from SBE in pronunciation, lexicon, syntax. Of the syntactical features, tense and aspect deviations are particularly prevalent.

### Indian Culture

Language in India is closely tied to the culture. Hinduism, practiced by the majority of the population, has had a major influence on Indian culture. Integral to Hindu beliefs is the caste system from the “untouchables” at the bottom to the Brahmins at the top. Individuals stay in the caste of their birth and usually do not marry outside of it (Henderson, 2002). Although the caste system is officially outlawed in India, it is deeply ingrained in the society and continues to be hegemonic. Language use in India is highly connected to caste and can limit educational and employment opportunities.

## Language History of India

### Indigenous Languages

India is a country with great language diversity. Five language families are represented: Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-European, Malayo-Polynesian and Sino-Tibetan. These language groups are regional with cultural ties to neighboring countries. There are over 3,000 mother tongues which can be classified into 110 different languages (Henderson, 2002). Fifteen of these languages are official regional languages (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002). The majority of the population speaks Dravidian or Indo-European languages which are found in the south and north, respectively (Henderson, 2002). Region notwithstanding, lower caste groups have the most divergent languages and are linguistically isolated from the higher castes (Southworth, 1978).

Historically, standard language forms of these indigenous languages were kept from the lower castes – a form of language hegemony. The higher, educated castes had access to the written form while the lower castes remained illiterate (Henderson, 2002). Initially, literacy was solely for religious texts. The Brahmans, considered to be the highest and most pure caste, were the only ones educated to read the religious texts. In ancient times, these texts were written in Sanskrit, which was a non-native language for all who learned it (Southworth, 1978). Thus, early on, academic language was limited to the elite class. To some extent, this is still true today. When discussing language use in India, it is important to consider factors affected by caste such as educational opportunities.

Hindustani eventually replaced Sanskrit as the language of the literate classes with Hindustani Urdu as the first genuine supragregional language in India (Southworth, 1978). By the late nineteenth century, Hindustani had become the *lingua franca* of India. Hindustani is primarily the spoken form of the language with Urdu and Hindi as written forms. Urdu is used by the Muslim population and Hindi is used by Hindus (*The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, 1975). Hindi's lexicon has many Persian and Arabic loanwords from Urdu. In modern India, efforts have been made to remove these Urdu influences from Hindi. Today, Hindi and English are the two official languages covering all of India (Henderson, 2002). English has officially been given "associate status" in India (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002).

#### The Origins of English

The introduction of English to India came primarily with British colonization in 1757. The British East India Company first initiated English-medium instruction in private schools in 1823. There were, however, some who opposed discontinuing vernacular-medium instruction at this point. An Oriental-Anglicist controversy ensued which ended ultimately in 1835 when "Macaulay's Minute" was passed advocating English-medium instruction throughout India. English-speaking educated people were needed to work as clerks in government posts in India and it was hoped that they would serve as interpreters between the British and those they ruled. Gradually, English spread and by 1928 was the language of administration and the pan-Indian press. English then became the language of the elite. Although official British rule ended in India in 1947, the English language has remained deeply ingrained in the elite class (Kachru, 1983).

### English in India Today

Most educated Indians today speak three or more languages which include their mother tongue, Hindi and English (Tully, 1997). Currently, India has a “three language formula” in its educational system which helps linguistically unite the plurilingual country. English, Hindi and the regional language are the three languages which are compulsory subjects in school (Khubchandani, 1994). If Hindi is the regional language, then another regional language is chosen so that there are still three languages required (Tully, 1997). Initially, a two-language policy (Hindi and the regional language) was proposed by the Indian government, but the southern states strongly objected to the selection of Hindi, as their languages are primarily Dravidian. A compromise was to add English as a third language (Krishnaswamy & Sriraman, 1995). Hindi is thus the common language of the north, while English linguistically unites the south.

English has replaced Hindi, however, as the ‘lingua franca’ of India. It is the language of government, higher education and commerce. Thus, there are more speakers of English in urban areas than there are in rural areas. In educated Indian society, English is the dominant language. This dominance can be seen in the relatively large number of books published in English. Hindi, one of five most widely spoken languages in the world, is far less published in India than English is. Although English is the dominant language, a low percentage (5% estimate) of the population can speak it (Tully, 1997). Still, this five percent represents more than 50 million English speakers in India out of a total population of over one billion people (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002).

### Indian English – A Nativized Variety

The English language is deeply rooted in India. Yet, it is its own English, differing from that of its 'parent' country Britain. Indian English, a sub-category of South Asian English, is considered a variety of English. There are several non-standard features of Indian English when compared with SBE/NAE. These features are not mistakes, but rather innovations common to a 'nativized' (Kachru, 1986) or 'indigenized' (S. Sridhar and K. Sridhar, 1994) variety of English. Kachru (1986) refers to Indian English as nativized because the language has been highly influenced by the many indigenous languages spoken in the country at the same time as its use was limited.

In India, English did not and does not exist in a monolingual setting as it did in the American Colonies, Australia and New Zealand. In those cases, the indigenous languages were pushed aside and English had free rein. The British Colonial government played a role in indigenizing Indian English as well by limiting the amount of English education in order to maintain a linguistic distance between the rulers and those being ruled. In the early colonial days, pidgin English was prevalent and even encouraged over SBE. Today there is a spectrum of Englishes spoken in India which is determined by the speaker's caste and occupation. The spectrum goes from pidgin on one end to standard English at the other end. At the middle is standard Indian English, the most commonly spoken variety (Kachru, 1983).

When considering the varietal nature of Indian English, it is important to note that English in India is primarily a second language (additional language). Few in India speak English as their native language. The acquisition of English, in general, lacks uniformity.

There is a great qualitative difference between public and private schools in India. There is also a difference between regions as the indigenous languages influence teaching methods. Throughout all of India, the focus of instruction is on the written form with little emphasis on speaking (Kachru, 1986). With little opportunity for oral practice in an academic setting, it is not surprising that Indian English has evolved as its own distinct variety of English.

Indian English is characterized by distinct differences in phonology, lexicon, and syntax. Phonological differences are due to the interference of indigenous languages and exacerbated by the lack of oral practice. Lexical distinctions are also from indigenous language influence such as *tiffin-carrier* – ‘a carrier for a snack or lunch’ (Kachru, 1986 p.28). The lexicon includes Indian words transferred directly such as: *kampon* – ‘a small settlement,’ and *makan* – ‘food’ (Kachru, 1983 p.28), and those translated into English such as *twice born* and *dining-leaf* (Kachru, 1983 p.80). Syntactical differences are numerous and include: reduplication – *I have some small, small things* (Kachru, 1983 p.79), subject/number verb agreement – *Women was treated as the Goddess...* (S. Sridhar, 1993 p.5) and common use of auxiliary verbs – *I am doing* for *I do* (Kachru, 1983 p.34). The tendency towards auxiliary verbs is directly related to the subject of this paper. One of the non-standard forms used to express the simple present is the progressive form which involves the use of an auxiliary.

### Non-Standard Expressions of the Simple Present

In Indian English, two non-standard constructions are used to express habits and states. These are the present progressive (*Every day I am cooking*) and *used to* (*Every day I used to cook*) forms. These forms are sometimes used when the simple form (*Every day I cook*) is used in SBE/NAE (Kachru, 1986). The development of the use of these forms has two possible explanations: first language transfer and over-generalization of grammar. First language transfer is considered a major factor influencing the syntactical features of Indian English (Kachru, 1983, 1986; S. Sridhar & K. Sridhar, 1994). First language transfer involves the transfer of some native language features to the language being learned, in this case, English. This transfer can be either a positive or negative transfer in its effect on acquisition. Transfer is an effective simplification strategy for second language acquisition in a plurilingual society with few native-English speakers. Yet, because of the limitations of acquisition, the features could also be a result of grammar over-generalization (Verma, 1994). Over-generalization occurs when the grammatical features mastered previously in language acquisition are generalized to new material. It is realistic to assume that the syntactical variations of Indian English may be caused by a combination of first language transfer and over-generalization of grammar.

#### First Language Transfer

In exploring possible indigenous language influences, it was prohibitive to study a representative number of languages, given the number of indigenous languages in India. In order to limit the analysis, Hindi was chosen because it is spoken by the majority of Indians and is a compulsory school subject. Hindi examples are taken from *Hindi*

*Grammar and Reader* (Bender, 1967). As stated earlier in this chapter, there is a tendency toward the use of auxiliaries in Indian English. When examining the simple present tense of Hindi, one finds that the BE auxiliary is used in its construction. The language is S-O-V order with the auxiliary verb in sentence-final position. The simple present is expressed: Subject – (Object)– Verb – Auxiliary BE as in (1) and (2).

(1) *Vah çtç hai*

vah	+	çtç	+	hai
he (-S.NOM)		come (V-pres part -masc 3ps)		is (aux 3ps present)
‘He comes.’				

(2) *Bill\* s ,t\* hai*

bill*	+	s ,t*	+	hai
cat (-S.NOM)		sleep (V-pres part -fem 3ps)		is (aux 3ps present)
‘The cat sleeps.’				

In SBE/NAE, simple present verbs are formed with no auxiliary. One could conclude, then, that there might be first language transfer in this case.

The progressive aspect in Hindi is more involved. The construction is formed by reducing the verb to its stem and inserting an inflected past participle of *rahna* (which indicates continuation) before the BE auxiliary as in (3) – (5).

(3) *Vah ç rahç hai*

Vah	+	ç	+	rahç	+
he (-S.NOM)		come (V-stem)		in the process of (V-masc 3ps past part)	

hai

is (aux-3ps present)

‘He is coming.’

(4) *Bill\* fars'-par s, rah\* hai*

bill\* + fars'-par + s, +  
 cat (-S.NOM) on the floor (prep phrase) sleep (V-stem)

rah\* + hai  
 in the process of (V-fem 3ps past part) is (aux-3ps present)

‘The cat is sleeping on the floor.’

(5) *Vidyçrth\* kitçb parh rahç hai*

vidyçrth\* + kitçb + parh +  
 student (-S.NOM) book (-NOM) read (V-stem)

rahç + hai  
 in the process of (V-masc 3ps past part) is (aux-3ps present)

‘The student is reading a book.’

The progressive is a more complex construction in Hindi than in English with the addition of the continuation agent. One could assume then that the speakers understand the nature of English aspect and are not transferring Hindi progressive features to English simple present. They are transferring the auxiliary from Hindi simple present. This rationale, however, is not necessarily true for stative verbs.

In Hindi, stative verbs such as *sunna* ‘to hear’ and *dekhna* ‘to see.’ which in English require the simple present, can be expressed with the progressive aspect (Kachru, 1983). Here the divergent form could be caused by different aspect rules for stative verbs rather than negative transfer of the auxiliary.

In addition to the present progressive, *used to* is a non-standard construction used in place of the simple form when talking about habits. In Hindi, the habitual present can be expressed with a form which can be translated as *used to* and means *accustomed to*. This form involves the use of the inflected past participle of *karna* which is inserted between the verb and the BE auxiliary, as in (6).

(6) *Vah har r , z kuch na kuch parhϕ kart\* hai*

vah	+	har r , z	+	kuch na kuch	+
She (S-nom)		every day (adv)		something or other (DO-nom)	
parhϕ	+	kart*	+	hai	
read (V-infinitive)		custom (V-fem. 3ps past participle)		is (aux- 3ps present)	

‘She is used to reading something or other everyday.’

In SBE/NAE, This form relates to a present habit: *I am used to cooking dinner every night*. Indian English, however, deletes the BE auxiliary and reduces the verb to its stem: *I used to cook dinner every night*. Although conveying a present habit is still intended, the utterance is misunderstood by native English speakers as a habit no longer practiced.

### Grammar Generalization

Indian English is a second language variety of English and thus would have been affected by acquisition order principles. The various Englishes along the Indian English spectrum could be considered various interlanguages. The non-standard verb forms used for the simple present could be due to *over-generalization*, an acquisition strategy. As Larsen-Freeman (1983) notes, learners memorize common patterns before understanding the constituent parts and they tend to over-generalize those patterns. The learner neutralizes the distinction between marked and unmarked forms, and major systems and subsystems. Thus, the utterance, *I am having a new car*, could be an example of over-generalization of the progressive form (Verma, 1994).

The morpheme studies done by Dulay and Brown in 1973 (as cited in Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1983) on children learning English as a second language established an order of acquisition of verb forms in which the present progressive was one of the earlier forms mastered (2 of 8). Third person singular was acquired much later (7 of 8). Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1983) duplicated the study with adults and found the progressive form to be the earliest form mastered. These authors note that the simple present tense involves the third person singular *s* which is acquired much later.

Agnihotri, Khanna and Mukherjee (1994) did a study to determine an implicational order of difficulty in the use of tenses in English for Indian English speakers. In their study, students classified as good, average or poor were tested with a closed-ended format to complete sentences with the correct tense and aspect. In all there were 32 tense/aspect combinations tallied. The present progressive was mastered well

before the present indefinite for habitual actions. Thus, the progressive used in place of the simple form could very well be due to over-generalization.

### English Tense and Aspect – Simple Present

A discussion of possible explanations for the syntactical differences of Indian English would not be complete without exploring issues of ‘aspect’. In the two previous sections, first language transfer and generalization were listed as possible factors. Aspect issues can stem from either of these areas. Perhaps the speaker is transferring aspect rules from the first language or generalizing English aspect rules for simplification. Even though the concept of aspect has a universal presence in all languages, it is not always manifested in the morphology as it is in English. Some languages have no overt aspect morphemes (Smith, 1997). Thus, if the first language does not differentiate aspect syntactically, a learner might not understand the importance of the morphological distinctions of English aspect. The learner may see no difference between using the simple form and the progressive form. Not all languages with a progressive form use the form exclusively – the use can be optional (Comrie, 1976).

The tense and aspect system used for English verb formation is complex. Tense is more easily learned than aspect because it fits neatly into three categories: past, present and future. It is temporal – the utterance time relative to the event time. Aspect, however, relates to the manner in which the event is occurring, the degree of completeness. There are two ‘viewpoints’ to aspect: the perfective and the imperfective. The perfective (simple) viewpoint is complete – it involves the entire event while the

imperfective shows the event in progress with the progressive form of the verb. Of the two viewpoints, the imperfective is mastered before the perfect because it is less specific, thus unmarked (Smith, 1997). This order of aspect acquisition could lead to the generalization of imperfective forms to perfective events which would explain the use of the progressive form in place of the simple form.

According to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.117), the present progressive is used in the following situations:

- a. activity in progress - *He is attending a meeting now.*
- b. extended present - *I'm studying geology at the University of Colorado.*  
(action will end)
- c. temporary situation – *Phyllis is living with her parents.*
- d. repetition of actions – *Henry is kicking the soccer ball around the yard.*
- e. express future w/time adverbial – *She's coming tomorrow.*
- f. emotional comment / present habit – *He's forever acting up at these affairs.*
- g. a change in progress – *She's becoming more and more like her mother.*

The simple present tense is the perfective viewpoint in the present tense. A limitation of the present tense is that it may not include any end points of situations. (If there were end points, the past tense would be implied.) The imperfective viewpoint is easily understood as having no end points by its progressive nature. However, the perfective viewpoint, in its goal to show completion, is limited to situation types that are stative or habitual. States have no ending, so no end point can be shown. Habits are considered to be statives because there is a pattern of events representing a state held

consistently over a period of time (Smith, 1997). Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.113, p.120) list in detail the situations in which the simple present tense is used in English:

- a. habitual acts in the present – *He walks to school every day.*
- b. timeless truths – *Water freezes at 0 degrees centigrade.*
- c. *be* and other stative verbs
  - Sensory perception – e.g. *smell, see, hear, taste, feel*  
*I smell something burning in the kitchen.*
  - Mental perception – e.g. *know, believe, think, understand, mean, doubt*  
*She understands the principles of photosynthesis.*
  - Possession – e.g. *possess, have, own, belong*  
*I have an allergy to cats.*
  - Emotions, attitudes, opinions – e.g. *like, love, hate, desire, need, want*  
*The boy needs new clothes.*
  - Measurement – e.g. *equal, measure, weigh, cost*  
*The shoes cost a lot of money.*
  - Relationship – e.g. *contain, entail, consist of*  
*Their antique collection contains many valuable pieces.*
  - Description – e.g. *be, resemble, sound, appear, seem, look*  
*The baby seems hungry.*
- d. In the subordinate clauses of time or condition with future-time adverbial –  
*After he finishes work, he'll do errands.*
- e. Express future/future-time adverbial – *I have a meeting next Wednesday.*
- f. Present event/action – *Now I add three eggs to the mixture.*
- g. Present speech acts – *I resign from the commission.*
- h. Historical present – *So he stands up in the boat and waves his arms.*

For the purposes of this paper, the uses of the simple present were limited to habitual acts in the present and states. The other situations involve future and past tense references using a present form, which is not within the scope of this paper.

There are times when the progressive form is used to express habits and states. These can be considered exceptions. When the progressive is combined with habitual meaning, it is implied that the repetition takes place over a limited period (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985, p.199):

- (7) *The professor types his own letters.* (The habit is permanent.)
- (8) *The professor is typing his own letters while his secretary is ill.*  
(The habit is temporary.)

There are exceptions to using the progressive for states as well. Quirk et al. (1985) state that this is usually an indication that the verb is being reclassified as dynamic – as with process or agentivity. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.121) categorizes progressive stative use as follows:

- a. intensify emotion – *I'm hating this assignment*
- b. indicate current behavior – *He's being rude.*
- c. introduce change in states – *I'm understanding less and less about life the older I get.*
- d. show limited duration – *Are you understanding it this?*
- e. emphasize conscious involvement – *What we are seeing is a red dwarf star.*
- f. show vividness – *One night in the middle of the night, I'm hearing dripping.*
- g. express politeness – *Are you liking it?*
- h. mitigate criticism – *I like the first piano notes, but I'm not liking it when the strings come in.*

- i. avoid imposition – *I was just wanting to invite you to a gathering...*

These exceptional uses of the progressive for statives are very nuanced and would be acquired later by a second language learner. The assumption was made for this study that any progressive habitual and stative utterances were not likely to be any of these exceptional forms and were more likely to be non-standard features of Indian English.

### Previous Research

#### English Instruction in India

One would think that, given the three-language education policy of India, more than 5% of the population would have command of the English language. One explanation for this limitation can be found in India's hegemonic system of instruction. The elite schools, which are attended by higher castes, tend to be English-medium instruction, while lower caste schools offer vernacular-medium English instruction. In addition, the methods of teaching English greatly differ in that the lower caste schools stress literature, memorization and grammar translation rather than more communicative practices (Tully, 1997). This inconsistency can explain in part, the spectrum of Indian English varieties spoken

V. Ramanathan (1999, 2002) has done two studies which explore the inequities of English education in India. V. Ramanathan (1999) tracked students from various secondary schools in their first year of University and found that University students from lower caste secondary schools had difficulty keeping up with those who had

attended higher caste schools. The lower group's English instruction had not prepared them for higher level classes or for occupations requiring English.

V. Ramanathan (2002) also analyzed state-mandated vernacular-medium and English-medium textbooks and found them to be highly divergent. The educational system in India is centralized at the state level with little room for individual teacher autonomy. There is a set textbook curriculum which must be followed. Both ends of the educational spectrum are therefore limited to textbook-based language instruction with an emphasis on grammar. One of the differences between vernacular-medium and English-medium textbooks was in what was expected of the students. The English-medium textbooks required more independence and critical thinking than the vernacular-medium textbooks, thus assuming higher expectations for the students. The content of the readings in the textbooks varied as well. Vernacular-medium content is focused on life skills whereas English-medium content is more anglo-focused, drawing from literary texts. Thus survival English is considered adequate for vernacular students. There is an assumption that those students will never progress to higher levels of education and employment.

Although communicative instructional methods are used in English-medium schools, they are lacking in substance and degree of use. H. Ramanathan and Bruning (2002) studied teachers in a large private English-medium school and found that oral and listening skills were not given much importance in the classroom. Teachers cited several factors which contributed to this tendency: large classes, test-driven curriculum, parents' low-level of education and the predominance of native language. Given that most

English teachers are not native speakers of English, students get little oral practice with a native speaker (S. Sridhar & K. Sridhar, 1994). The combination of these factors may contribute to the divergent nature of Indian English.

#### Non-Standard Syntactical Features

Major studies dealing with the acceptability of these non-standard forms include Patnaik and Geetha (1994) and Parasher (1994). Patnaik and Geetha obtained opinions on various forms in an effort to determine features of standard Indian English. The respondents had a good command of English and included college and university teachers of English and other subjects as well as executives and journalists in India. Their task was to look at fifteen pairs of sentences containing auxiliaries and mark if they were identical in meaning or not and why. However, as the survey was incomplete, the results of a subset of the group and only three pairs of sentences were published in this report. The results were based on data collected from fifty university English teachers who were given the following present tense to evaluate (p.225):

(9) *My watch works perfectly*

(10) *My watch is working perfectly*

The results of the limited data collected in the survey were that the respondents correctly discerned the different meanings of the two sentences. Thus it was concluded that the non-standard use of the present progressive for the simple present was not a standard feature of Indian English. However, these results do not reflect the general educated population. The results were skewed because English teachers are trained to discern differences in aspect, and given time to examine written data, can correctly

identify meaning according to SBE. Therefore, the findings are inconclusive. The report omitted comments on possible skewing of results and was remiss in doing so. The data on the other subgroups is likely to be more representative of the population.

Parasher's (1994) study reflects a more representative sample of Indian English using authentic writing samples. Writing samples were collected from two organizations: a nationalized bank and a research institute and were comprised of letters and reports sent out and received. The study's purpose was two-fold: first, to determine non-standard features of Indian English and second, to assess acceptability of these features from three points of view – native speakers of SBE, NAE, and Indian English (university English teachers). Parasher collected data on syntax, lexis and style. Within the syntax category a subcategory of 'tense and aspect' was established. The six participants (two of each viewpoint) were asked to read through the various business letters and mark any unacceptable expressions within context. The following are examples taken from the data collected (Prasher, 1994 p.153).

- Present progressive in place of simple present

(11) *We are manufacturing a malted food...*

Indian English speakers accepted this use while SBE and NAE rejected it.

- Stative verbs

(12) *The applicant is having 15 years' experience.*

All three groups rejected this in favor of simple present.

- Habitual

The use of *used to* for repetitive activity was unacceptable to all three groups. (no examples given)

Parasher has determined that the above features are common in Indian English yet are not considered by all as acceptable. All groups agreed that the stative progressive and the *used to* construction were unacceptable. The Indian English group did not, however, object to the non-stative progressive.

### Conclusion

There is little research done on oral production of non-standard grammatical features of Indian English. Oral production, as compared to written, does not allow the luxury of time to evaluate and correct forms and is thus a more realistic indicator of the variety of English spoken in India. Therefore, my research focused on oral expressions of the simple present in order to test for the following non-standard features: present progressive used in place of the simple present, the expression of stative verbs, and the use of *used to* for habituality.

The Methods Chapter, which follows, outlines the research methodology used to answer the question: How pervasive are the non-standard oral expressions of the simple present tense by speakers of Indian English and what are the potential factors influencing these features?

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Introduction

This research study was an effort to understand the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the imperfect present by a small group of Indian English speakers. The goals of the research were to determine what verb forms are used most often by these individuals when discussing habits and states and to find the potential factors having either a positive or negative influence towards 'standard' production. Possible explanations for the syntactical differences of Indian World English were addressed previously in the literature review and include first language interference, grammar generalization (simplification) and English instructional methods. Background information related to these factors was gathered on each participant through a written questionnaire. This provided a language and education profile for each speaker and later was used in the analysis of the speech sample. The speech sample was obtained during a speaking task which elicited the targeted verb forms. Anecdotal information gathered during the ensuing group debriefing and discussion session was integrated into the analysis. These three elicitation techniques – written questionnaire, individual speech sample and group discussion – provide a varied approach for exploring the research question.

### Research Subjects

The research group used for this study is comprised of a fairly homogenous group of 12 women from India. All in their twenties, they live in the same apartment complex. Their husbands are all employed by the same Indian contracting company. The women

are university educated from the upper castes of Indian society. They differ, however, in their mother tongue and additional languages spoken. Although they have received formal education in English, they have little opportunity to use it here because they are not in the workforce. They tend to speak their various Indian languages with their friends and husbands. They are not currently enrolled in ESL classes but agreed to participate in this study which was part of a six-session rhythm and intonation class taught onsite.

## Data Collection

### Questionnaire

The purpose of the written questionnaire (see Appendix A) was to gain information that would serve as a foundation upon which to examine the speaking task data. Factors which could influence the acquisition of standard English grammar were the focus of the questions. The questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to the following: language background, educational and employment experience, length of time in the U.S. and perceptions about Indian World English. There were 13 questions in all which ranged from closed questions such as “What is your mother tongue?” to open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of English in India. Answers to the discrete questions were designed so they could easily be compiled in a chart that would be used for comparison. Although the group of participants was fairly homogeneous, information from the questionnaire differentiated them. The open-ended questions provided supporting information. There was opportunity to discuss the questionnaire with each participant during the speaking task.

### Speaking Task

Indian World English differs from SBE/NAE in several grammatical features. Among these features is the verb form used for the perfective viewpoint in the present tense. While native English speakers use the simple form (*Every night I cook dinner*), Indian English includes alternate forms such as the present progressive (*Every night I am cooking dinner*) and the *used to* construction (*Every night I used to cook dinner*). Note: *used to* is intended to convey present habit, not past. In general, the differences between the Indian English variety and SBE/NAE are not fixed and speakers fall within a spectrum: from pidgin at one end to SBE at the other end (Kachru, 1983). The aim of this study was to find if there were prevalence and patterns of use of the various verb forms with this particular group of subjects.

The speaking task was designed to elicit present tense verb forms with the perfective viewpoint. In SBE/NAE, present tense sentences cannot show end points. The present imperfective aspect shows continuation, while the present perfective aspect shows no end at all (Smith 1997). Habits and states have no end point – they are ongoing. The habitual act of *I drive to work every day* has no foreseeable end– it happened yesterday, today and will happen tomorrow. The mental state of knowledge fits the same definition – *I know how to sew* assumes that it will be forever so. The speaking task of the study was designed to elicit these habitual and stative verbs.

In designing the speaking task, there were considerations as to the method of implementation. It would be possible for the examiner to unintentionally model the targeted verb form while asking questions or clarifying. Saying “What do you do

everyday?” might elicit more simple forms, while asking, “What are you doing every day?” might elicit the progressive form. In order to avoid this skewing, two cue cards were developed that listed general topics (see Appendix B). One was titled “Habits” and included the sub-topics of daily routine, hobbies, and sports. The other card was titled “Traditions” and included beliefs, holidays, food and dress. During the audio-taped one-on-one session, the participant was simply asked to talk freely about the topics listed on the cards. There was little response from the examiner in an effort to limit modeling of verb forms.

Both cards targeted habitual and stative verb forms. When talking about the cue card topics, standard simple present habitual responses would be: *I take the bus to work* (routine), *I sew* (hobbies), *I play tennis* (sports), *I pray* (beliefs), *We light candles* (holidays), *We eat special food* (food), and *We wear saris* (dress). The stative verbs targeted were narrowed down to three types – mental perception (*know, believe, think, understand*), possession (*possess, have, own, belong*) and emotions, attitudes and opinions (*like, love, want, desire, need, feel*). Any of the speaking topics could elicit stative verb responses. Examples in the standard simple form are: *I like to read* (hobbies), *I think you should exercise* (sports), *We believe in God* (beliefs), and *We have a special festival* (holidays).

#### Group Debriefing and Discussion Session

During the questionnaire and the speaking task, the participants had not been aware of the specific purpose of the study. The debriefing session was thus a way to unveil the research question and in turn broaden their awareness of the syntactical

differences between Indian English and SBE/NAE. An information sheet (see Appendix C) was distributed which explained the simple present tense for habit and states and listed the various verb forms elicited by the group. This formed a framework for general discussion. The group was asked what could be influencing the use of non-standard verb forms – was it mother tongue, Hindi, education, or contexts of use? The discussion was audio-taped and later transcribed.

### Data Analysis

The aim of the analysis was to record the verb utterances, find patterns and compare with participant profiles in order to find possible influences. Data collected from the three elicitation methods was integrated for the analysis. Transcriptions of the audio-taped speech samples included present tense verb forms only. The BE copula was omitted. The verb forms were categorized as to type and the totals were entered into a table. The table contains the total number of verb utterances for each verb type separated out by stative and non-stative verbs. A pie chart was made for each participant which showed the combination and prevalence of verb forms used. This served as a visual for comparing participants to one another. They were then categorized by their preferred verb form: simple, non-standard, and no preference. This categorization enabled comparison by cross-checking the participant profile.

The questionnaire information formed a profile for each participant. The information was compiled into a chart for easy comparison. The main chart headings were, mother tongue, additional languages, English education, degree(s), employment

experience and length of time in the U.S.. Each participant's speech sample data was interfaced with her profile and each preference group was then compared to find possible influences. What were the factors that had a positive influence towards more 'standard' forms? In turn, what were the negative influences? Were stative verbs treated differently than non-stative verbs?

Finally, anecdotal information gathered from the group discussion was used to augment the findings. The participants' comments about the different verb forms and their usage provided clues as to possible influences. It was important also, to integrate qualitative information on perceptions and acceptability of standard vs. non-standard forms. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data provided a comprehensive view of the results which sought to be a fair representation of the English language profile of each participant.

### Conclusion

In order to research the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the simple present tense by Indian English speakers, a certain amount of raw data was required for analysis. This data required the support of other related information in order to complete the analysis. The elicitation techniques developed for this study were both qualitative and quantitative and ranged in the amount of control. The questionnaire was a combination of discrete and open-ended questions which, along with the group discussion, were qualitative methods. The speaking task was loosely structured so that the participant could speak freely, yet the results were quantifiable. The quantitative

analysis of the speaking task provided the crucial data that formed an interface with the other tools. The three methods combined in an effort to find factors which potentially influence this non-standard syntactical feature of Indian English.

Although the results can only be attributed to this specific research group, the data obtained can be further studied for pedagogical implications. If the non-standard forms are pervasive enough, explicit instruction on the imperfect aspect verb forms would be beneficial for Indian World English speakers.

The following chapter reports the findings of the research. The data from the speaking task is analyzed and interpreted based on information from the questionnaire and group debriefing session. The potential factors influencing the speaking profiles are explored for each participant with an effort to identify possible trends.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study took place over a two-week period and involved a variety of elicitation techniques. To begin with, the twelve participants were given written questionnaires to answer. The information gathered from this questionnaire helped to create a language profile of each participant and formed a foundation for the study. The questionnaire was followed by individual audio-taped speech samples. The beginning of these sessions consisted of an informal conversation on the completed questionnaire. This was followed by a speaking task whereby the participant was given a cue card and asked to talk about the topics on the card. There were two cue cards – one for habits and one for traditions. This was an effort to elicit the habitual and stative present verb forms, respectively. When all of the participants had completed the individual audio-taping, a group debriefing and discussion was conducted. This was also audio-taped. Field notes were inconsequential and thus are not included. All of the above elicitation techniques were used to gather information to make links between language profile and the preferred form for expressing habits and states.

### Questionnaire

The written questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of thirteen questions regarding language, education and employment backgrounds. A compilation of the answers to the most pertinent questions are displayed in Table 1. There were six mother tongue languages represented, the greatest number of which was Tamil (five). The other mother tongue languages represented were: Telegu (two), Marathi (two), Malayalam

**Table 1**

## COMPILATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

#	Mother Tongue	Other Languages (besides English)	English Education	Degree(s)	Employment Experience	How long in the U.S.
1	Telegu	Hindi, Tamil, Kannada	Private Eng-med	B.S. Phys Asst	1 yr intern	2 mos
3	Telegu	none fluently	Public Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	MBA	Admin. used Telegu	3 mos
4	Tamil	Hindi	Private Eng-med Anglo-Indian	M. Comp App	none	3 mos
6	Tamil	Hindi	Private Eng-med	MBA	HR Consult. 5 months	3 mos
7	Marathi	Hindi	Private vern-med Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	M.S. Inorg. Chem	Chemist/ Graphic Designer	1 ½ yrs
8	Marathi	Hindi	Private vern-med Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	B. Elec Eng	IT Field 2 years	1 yr
9	Tamil	Hindi, Telegu, Kannada	Private Eng-med	B. Engineering	Lecturer 3 years	1 ½ mos
10	Malayalam	Oriya, Telegu	Public Eng-Med then Private Eng-med	MBA-Finance	Finance Coordinator	6 mos
11	Marwari	Hindi, Kannada, Marathi	Private Eng-med	B. Commerce Masters-MIS	none	9 mos
12	Tamil	none	Public Eng-med	M. Comp App	none	9 mos
13	Tamil	Hindi	Public Eng-med	M. Comp App	Bank Officer 6 months	3 mos
15	Hindi	none	Private Eng-med	M. IT	Lecturer	1 mo

(one), Marwari (one) and Hindi (one). Mother tongue language groups are highly regional in India. The participants were from the regions where these languages are found. Tamil is spoken in Tamil-Nadu and most of the subjects in this group were from the city of Chennai (formerly known as Madras) on the southeastern coast of India. Telegu is spoken in the state of Andhrapradesh in the south-central part of India; Malathi is spoken in Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay) on the west coast; Malayalam is spoken in the state of Kerala in the southwest; Marawari and Hindi are both spoken in the northern part of India. A language map of India can be found in Appendix D .

In discussing additional languages spoken, it is understood that all participants speak English. Therefore, it is not listed as an additional language. Most of the participants (with the exception of two) spoke Hindi in addition to their mother tongue. Three respondents listed fluency in yet two more languages.

Most of the participants (nine) had started learning English at the beginning of elementary school in an English-medium school. The other three had English as a subject from the beginning of school, but didn't start English-medium instruction until 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Nine attended private schools while three attended public schools.

All of the subjects have university degrees: eight have Masters degrees, four have Bachelors degrees. The areas of study include computer science, business, and engineering. Their employment history varies from none to three years at the most. Many of the participants are new to the U.S., having been here three months or less. Only two of them have been here for more than a year.

Information on language use, English instructional methods and attitudes about the different varieties of English were not compiled in the table because the results are similar from one participant to another. When asked in what contexts they use various languages, they all reported that English was used in professional, educational and official settings. It is also used as a common language among educated people from different states. Although Hindi is one of the official languages of India, its use is differentiated between the north and south. In the north, Hindi is used as a common language for people from different states. In the south it is not used as much since the local languages are very strong. When shopping, Hindi is used with vendors who do not speak the local language, and with friends from different states who do not know English. The mother tongue is spoken at home and with family members. It is also used when speaking to servants and local shop keepers and friends within the state.

The instructional methods used in teaching English were primarily reading, writing and memorization. There was an emphasis on grammar and little on speaking. Textbooks and literature were used extensively.

Two of the questions deal with perceptions of the differences between the varieties of English relevant to this study: Indian English compared with SBE and Indian English compared with NAE. Although they sense a difference in pronunciation, most do not detect any syntactical differences. When asked about perceived differences between IE and NAE, three included grammar. The responses to this question, however, were skewed towards that answer because the title of the study on the consent form was: *Grammatical Differences between Indian English and American English.*

In general the attitudes about the use of English in India are very positive. If one can speak English well, the reasoning goes, he or she gets more respect in the community and has better employment opportunities. The older generation as a rule encourages increasing proficiency in English. However, there was one respondent who said there was a controversy about the pervasiveness of English. Some people are worried that the local languages will be diminished the more English is used.

### Speaking Task

The speaking task was an effort to record an authentic speech sample targeting expressions of the habitual and stative present tense. During the one-on-one audio-taped session, the participant was given two cue cards (see Appendix B) listing topics to speak about. One card was about habits with the following sub-categories: daily routine, hobbies, and sports. The other card was meant to elicit stative verbs and was titled “traditions”. The subcategories were beliefs, holidays, food, and dress. The participants spoke for five to ten minutes each. The content expressed for daily routine was very similar from one participant to the next because they are all living in similar situations. During transcription, only the present tense verb forms were listed. The BE copula was not included. The number of verb utterances for each session ranged from 20 to 74. Many of the verbs were repeated. The audio transcription is found in Appendix E.

The verbs uttered by each speaker were categorized into six form types. The expected forms were the simple present, the present progressive and the *used to* + infinitive construction. Three additional forms were found which were not expected.

These involved the use of the modal *will* + infinitive, *will* + progressive and *would* + infinitive. For example: *I will cook, I will clean; I will be listening to music, I will be watching TV and I would relax, I would prepare*. An quantitative analysis of the data is shown in Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2.

Of the six form categories, only the simple present form is considered standard for expressing the habitual and stative present in SBE/NAE. Three of the speakers exhibited all standard forms and two uttered only a few non-standard forms. The other speakers tended to prefer the modal *will* with the infinitive. *Will* with the progressive was also used by three of those speakers. One person used *would* + infinitive in lieu of *will* + infinitive. The construction *used to* with the infinitive was used often by three subjects and occasionally by two others. The progressive form was not as pervasive as expected. It was uttered once or twice by seven people and five times by one. Often the respondents would utter the progressive form as a noun gerund. For example, when prompted to talk about daily routine, they would sometimes list activities they would be doing: *cooking, cleaning, watching TV*. These forms were not recorded as verb forms.

The speakers' verb form preferences were categorized into three general types for easier analysis: 1) prefers simple form most of the time (six participants), 2) prefers the *will* + infinitive form (four participants) and 3) uses many forms indiscriminately (two participants).

The profiles of the participants within each of the three preference categories were compared to find similarities. This was an effort to determine possible factors (mother tongue, additional languages, English education, employment experience and length of

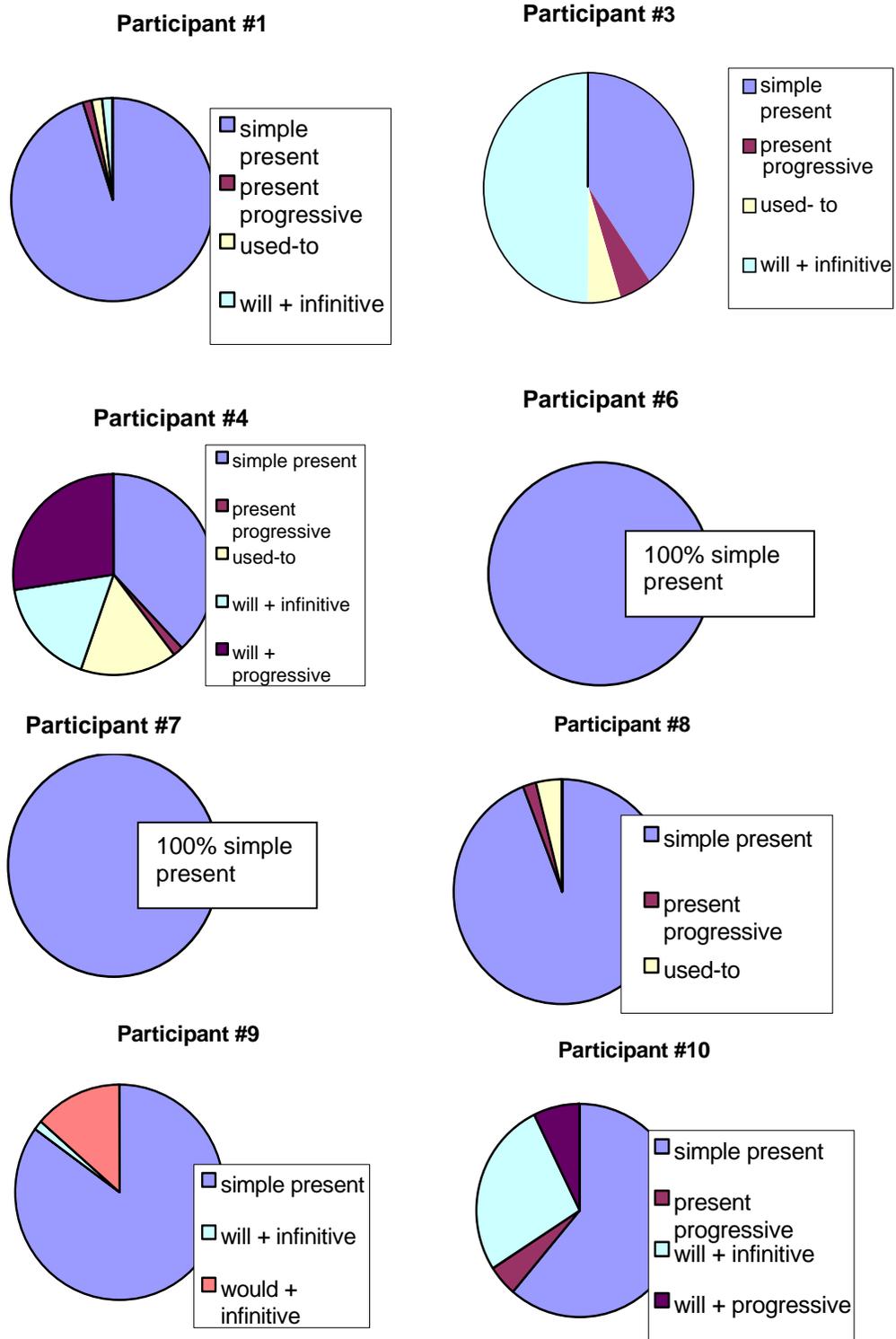
**Table 2**  
**Verb Forms Used by Participants**

Partic- pant #		# present- tense verbs	simple present	present progress.	<i>used to</i>	<i>will +</i> <i>infinitive</i>	<i>will +</i> <i>progress.</i>	<i>would +</i> <i>infinitive</i>	% simple present (out of present- tense verbs)
1	Habitual	47	44	1	1	1	0	0	94%
	Statives	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	62	59	1	1	1	0	0	95%
3	Habitual	16	4	1	1	10	0	0	25%
	Statives	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	20	8	1	1	10	0	0	40%
4	Habitual	48	16	0	9	9	14	0	33%
	Statives	10	6	1	0	1	2	0	60%
	Total	58	22	1	9	10	16	0	38%
6	Habitual	27	27	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	39	39	0	0	0	0	0	100%
7	Habitual	32	32	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	100%
8	Habitual	35	33	0	2	0	0	0	94%
	Statives	16	15	1	0	0	0	0	94%
	Total	51	48	1	2	0	0	0	94%
9	Habitual	62	51	0	0	1	0	10	82%
	Statives	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	74	63	0	0	1	0	10	85%
10	Habitual	27	15	1	0	8	3	0	56%
	Statives	14	10	1	0	3	0	0	71%
	Total	41	25	2	0	11	3	0	61%
11	Habitual	33	33	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	100%
12	Habitual	44	13	2	0	29	0	0	30%
	Statives	13	10	3	0	0	0	0	77%
	Total	57	23	5	0	29	0	0	40%
13	Habitual	41	3	2	5	31	0	0	7%
	Statives	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	44	6	2	5	31	0	0	14%
15	Habitual	24	5	1	0	18	0	0	21%
	Statives	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	33	14	1	0	18	0	0	42%

Prefers simple form: #1, # 6, #7, #8, #9, #11

Prefers *will* constructions: #3, #12, #13, #15

Shows no preference: #4, #10



**Figure 1**  
**Percentages of Verb Forms Used by Participant**

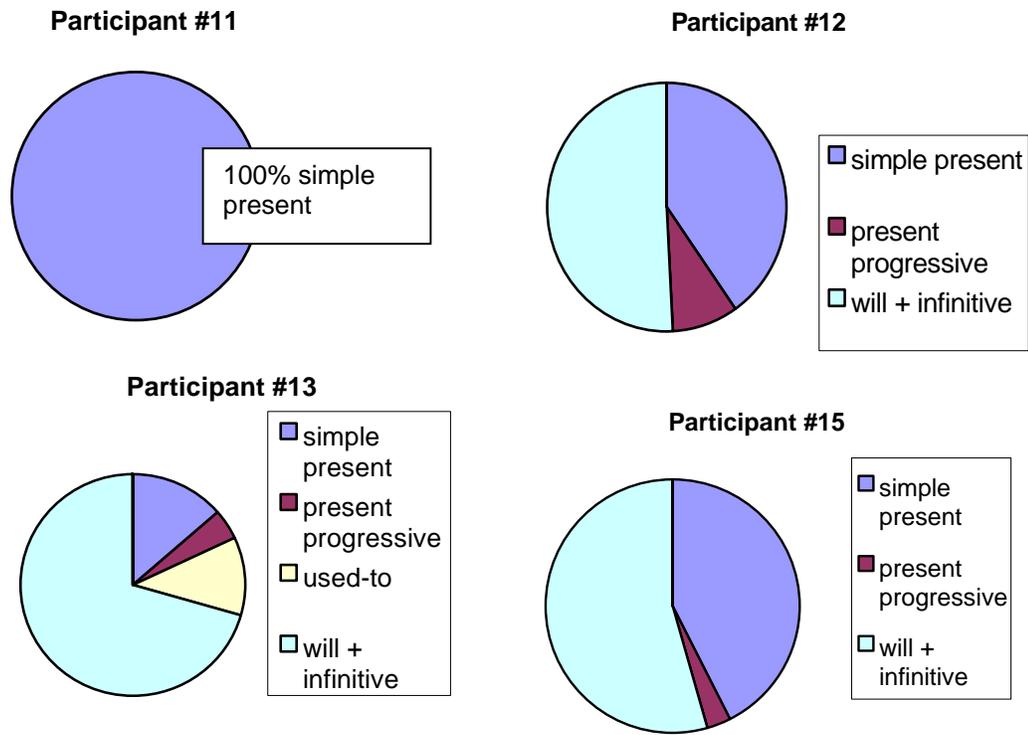


Figure 1 (continued)

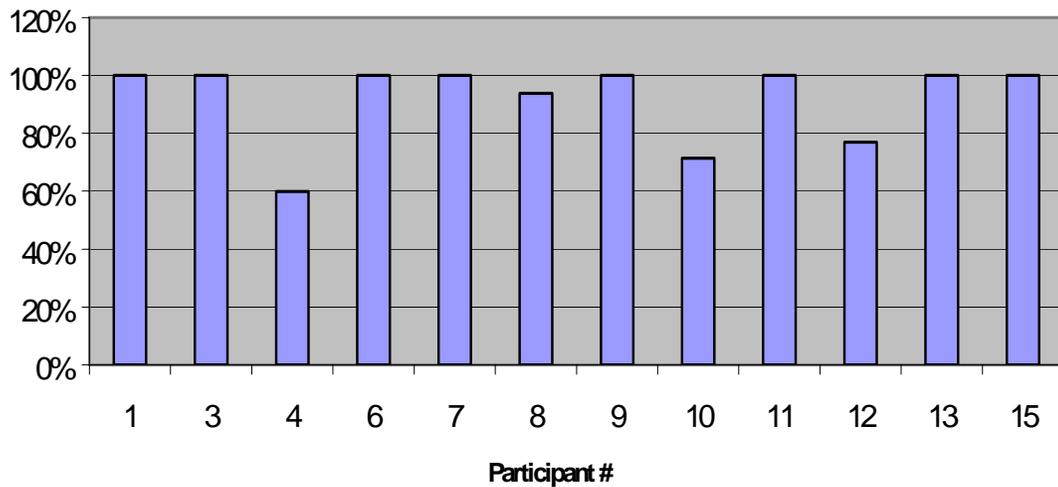


Figure 2  
Percentage Statives in Simple Form

time in the U.S) influencing the preference. It was difficult to detect any trends. Often an advantage in one area would counteract a disadvantage in another area. Yet, why do some prefer the standard form and others do not? The group that preferred the simple form was analyzed in an effort to find any differentiating features.

#### Profiles of Those Who Prefer the Simple Present Form

The profiles of the speakers who preferred the simple (standard) form were examined and no similarity was found. In fact, there are other participants who share the same profile as a standard speaker but exhibit non-standard forms. There are two speakers within this group, however, who share a profile which is different from the rest of the group. The profile differs in three areas: mother tongue, English instruction and length of time in the U.S.. They are from Mumbai (Bombay) and speak Marathi as their mother tongue. Perhaps there is some positive transfer from Marathi which favors the simple form. They attended private Marathi-medium schools until high school at which time they switched to English-medium schools. Ordinarily, one would predict that starting English-medium instruction later than the others would have resulted in more non-standard forms. Perhaps studying English initially only as a subject for years solidifies “correct” English grammar while allowing them to fully develop their L1. Another possible influence could be length of time in the U.S. They both have been in the U.S. for over a year (the longest time of any of the participants).

The other four who prefer the standard form have different mother tongues and have all attended private English-medium schools. Because these factors have commonality with the other speakers, they will be discounted as influencing the

preference. Three of the subjects had employment experience requiring the use of English in an interactive setting: a physician's assistant for one year, a human resources consultant for five months and an engineering college lecturer. English-speaking employment experience thus could be an influencing factor. The fourth subject had not been employed but has been in the U.S. longer – nine months vs. three months. Time in the U.S. might not, however, be relevant because one could assume that after years of speaking English, grammatical forms would firmly established (fossilized). The number of additional languages spoken could also increase the likelihood of more standard forms. Three of these speakers speak three other languages in addition to their mother tongue and English. Perhaps more language learning in general increases proficiency.

Many influencing factors have been addressed above, but there are two factors which can only be surmised as they are difficult to measure. They are language aptitude and motivation. It is possible that these “standard” speakers have a good aptitude for language learning and/or have been highly motivated to achieve standard academic English.

#### Profiles of Those Who Prefer *Will* + Infinitive

Among the four participants who preferred the *will* + infinitive form, two were generally less confident about their oral proficiency in English. They have language profiles that would support this – no languages other than the mother tongue and English. All of the other participants at least speak Hindi. They both attended public schools. One school was English-medium, the other English-medium after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Neither has employment experience using English.

It is more difficult to identify influences with the other two speakers. For one, the only factor in the profile would be that she attended a public English-medium school and perhaps that particular public school was inferior to a private school. The other participant attended a private English-medium school. She speaks Hindi as a mother tongue and has no other language besides English. Hindi is an official language and, as it is the mother tongue as well, would perhaps be used extensively in lieu of English.

#### Profiles of Those Who Show No Preference

The two speakers in this category are an enigma. Their profiles are similar to many of the other speakers. However, one speaker was the only one who attended an Anglo-Indian school. Ordinarily, this educational experience would point to more standard forms being expressed, yet this is not the case. With little in their profiles to distinguish these speakers, what could explain their seemingly indiscriminate use of forms to express the habitual and stative present? Perhaps it is a function of personality and personal preference. These two speakers might enjoy varying the forms for their own sake or that of the listener. This phenomenon points to a potential difference in the concept of aspect. Perhaps their aspect rules are more flexible than those of a native English speaker.

#### Distinctions Between Habitual and Stative Expressions

The verbs uttered were categorized as either stative or non-stative verbs (listed as habitual in Table 2). The stative verbs identified were of the following categories: mental perception – *believe, know, mean, think*; emotions/attitudes/opinions – *accept, enjoy, feel, like, love, need, prefer, want*; possession – *have*. When *have* was used to

express eating or drinking, it was not counted as a stative expression. The sensory verbs *see* and *hear* were discounted because they were often used to mean *watch* and *listen* which are not stative verbs. The data in Table 2 and Figure 2 show that even among non-standard speakers, there is a tendency to use the simple form with statives. This implies that the aspectual rules for statives are more firmly planted. Of the nine people who exhibited mixed forms, five used the simple form exclusively when expressing statives. Of the four remaining speakers, two used a non-standard form for statives only a few times. The remaining two showed no form preference. Examples of non-standard stative expressions are: *We are knowing*, *They are having Saturday and Sunday off*, *They are accepting*, and *We will be having more belief*.

#### Analysis of Verbs Used

Within each form category, the verbs used were examined to find patterns. Were some verbs more prevalent in one form than in another?

The simple present form. The preference for the simple form for statives has already be discussed. The data of the mixed-form speakers was then examined to see which non-stative verbs tend to be expressed in the simple form in lieu of other forms. The most common verbs were those that express short duration: *get up*, *leave*, *come*, *go*, *put*, and *take*.

The present progressive form. The present progressive form was used infrequently. The verbs represented were stative and non-stative: *coming*, *celebrating*, *having* (Saturdays and Sundays off), *having* (a good mood), *wearing*, *accepting*, *helping*, *knowing*. It is interesting to note that the speakers use other forms of the same verbs.

The verb itself does not seem to dictate which form is used. In fact, there seems to be little pattern to the forms used by any one speaker. With regards to the non-stative verbs (*coming, celebrating, wearing, and helping*), it is unclear whether the progressive aspect was being stressed or whether the form was being used indiscriminately. In each case, the speaker was talking about things that happen on a regular basis as a matter of habit or tradition.

Used to plus infinitive. Five speakers exhibited the use of this form. Great care was given to ensure that these utterances were indeed the present tense and not the past tense. The verb most often represented in this category was *used to go* (by all speakers). Three speakers had only one *used to* utterance which was indeed *used to go*. The following is a list of verbs used by the other two speakers: *paint, make, wear, prepare, watch, laugh, talk, check, do, and see*. The *used to* construction is used to express something that one is accustomed to doing. The following verbs are not usually expressed with *used to*: verbs expressing habits that are common to most people such as: *eat, drink, sleep, take a bath* and verbs of short duration such as *start, get up, and leave*.

Will or would with infinitive. Six speakers used the *will* + infinitive construction while one used *would* + infinitive in lieu of *will*. *Would* has a more nuanced effect than *will* and the person who preferred *would* was indeed a more standard speaker. In the *will* + infinitive category there were a variety of non-stative verbs used. They were used with pervasiveness especially among those who prefer this form. There is no pattern to the non-stative verbs chosen. The few stative verbs expressed with this form are: *will think, will believe* and *will have*. Again, the subjects were talking about habits and traditions –

things that happen on a regular basis. Perhaps they view these things as sure to happen in the future and thus are using the modal *will*. Anecdotally, this construction is sometimes used by native speakers of English when talking about daily routine. If the utterance time is early in the day and they are talking about something that habitually occurs later in the day, the *will* + infinitive form might be used. Yet, one should consider that perhaps this form is being used because a modal is an easier form to master. This would be in keeping with the theory of over-generalization – that there is a preference for the less marked form. This is not as likely given the advanced English education level of these participants.

*Will with progressive.* An example of this form is: *I'll be watching TV*. This form was only used by two people who also used *will* + infinitive. Within these *will* constructions, the infinitive form can be compared with the progressive form. The non-stative verbs used in the progressive form were: *doing, penning down, sitting, relaxing, cleaning, washing, asking, telling, watching, working, talking, chatting, maintaining*. The stative verbs used in the progressive form were: *having* and *feeling*. Most of these verbs were also used in other forms by the same people. It is unclear again, whether the progressive aspect was intended or the choice of forms indiscriminate.

#### Debriefing Session and Group Discussion

At the beginning of the last session, a handout (see Appendix C) was given to the group which described the purpose of the research and the four non-standard forms for expressing habits and states that were identified. The various forms were discussed

individually. The group was asked to consider the following influences: mother tongue, Hindi, methods of English instruction and contexts where English is used. At the end of the session there was discussion on the preferred habitual forms for each mother tongue.

#### Present Progressive

There was consensus that those less proficient in English use this form more often. When asked if they thought it was an easier form, they agreed. Although it is unclear whether or not they would have identified this feature on their own.

#### Used to

There was much discussion on this form. All were aware that it is a form used by many Indian English speakers. Only some of them were aware of the confusion with the past tense when communicating with an American native English speaker. There was a lot of discussion between the participants to clarify the sense of *used to*. One person said that it was a Telegu influence. If this is so, then the influence must have spread because the two participants who used this form the most are from the Tamil-Nadu region which is nearby.

#### Will Constructions

Immediately upon identifying this form a participant said, 'That's Tamil. We do that in Tamil. That is directly from Tamil.' The other Tamil speakers agreed this to be the case. Yet not all and not only Tamil speakers used this construction. Those with the mother tongue of Telegu, Malayalam and Hindi also used it. Telegu and Malayalam are both Dravidian languages as is Tamil. Perhaps there is a similarity. Those language regions are neighboring so there could be a regional influence as well. Hindi, however, is

an Indo-European language, and it is unclear as to how the *will* construction would be acquired by this speaker. It is interesting to note that the two Marathi speakers did not use this construction.

### English Instruction

There were not many comments on this topic. According to the participants, private schools are superior to public schools. It is common to have native English speakers (Anglo-Indian) as English teachers in private schools. Most seemed to think that it is most beneficial to start English-medium instruction as soon as possible. An English-medium school can sometimes be bilingual since the state language is used to clarify. One participant, however, said that in her school they were fined if they spoke a language other than English and she exhibited primarily standard forms in the speaking task.

### Hindi/English Influence

The group acknowledged that they sometimes alter the word order of Hindi to a word order similar to English, although they did not attribute this to the pervasiveness of English in India. They said they did it for fun or for nuance. When told that perhaps English is influencing Hindi in this way, they were intrigued and agreed that it was possible. In India today there is a tendency towards speaking 'Hinglish' (a combination of Hindi and English) when shopping and talking with friends. English has had such an impact on society that it is considered 'fashionable' to speak English. Some families speak only English at home in an effort to maximize proficiency. As proficiency in the vernacular language declines, it becomes necessary to use Hinglish as a common

language. In fact, other mother tongues are mixed with English as well. Language purity is difficult to find in India.

#### Mother Tongue Preferred Forms

Each language group was given a short translation exercise in order to determine the preferred form for expressing the habitual (statives were neglected at this point). The following sentences were given: *He cooks every day*; *He is cooking now*; and *He is in the habit of cooking every day*. Six languages were represented, yet information was obtained by only five. (The Marwari speaker said her language is very close to Hindi and chose to work with the Hindi native speaker on the translation exercise.) In Hindi, Marathi and Malayalam, the preferred form is the simple form while in Tamil the *will* form is preferred. Telegu speakers prefer equally the simple form and the ‘in the habit of’ form, yet accept all forms. Many of the participants admitted that they did not know there was a rule in English about using the simple present to express the habitual.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find possible factors influencing the non-standard expressions of the habitual and stative present of Indian English speakers. Initially, the focus was on two non-standard forms: present progressive and *used to* + infinitive. The progressive was expressed only occasionally during the speaking task, *used to*, a little more. An unexpected, yet more prevalent form was the modal *will* + infinitive construction. There were a few examples of the progressive version of this form as well as the modal *would* + infinitive. In all, many different combinations of

forms were used by the twelve participants to express habits and states in the present tense. Comments made during the debriefing discussion suggest that the participants were unaware of rules for a standard form to use when expressing habits and states. In addition, the results of the questionnaire show that many perceive no syntactical differences between Indian English and SBE.

The variation of forms expressed by this group is interesting to note in terms of aspect. The participants' aspectual rules seem more closely aligned with standard academic English when expressing states rather than habits. The simple form was the predominant form used for states. There is greater aspectual subjectivity involved in expressing habits. The duration of the action as well as the perceived level of commonality seems to influence the form used. When talking about habits one could think in aspectual terms of the future since the habit will indeed occur in the future with regularity. This could explain the use of the modal *will* as in, *I will cook dinner*. It is unclear whether to attribute the differences in forms to aspect or to other factors such as mother tongue influence or general issues of proficiency.

In analyzing the results of the study, it can be argued that several potential factors may be influencing the forms used. These influences may be both positive and negative, and may include mother tongue, number of additional languages, English education and employment experience. Regarding mother tongue, there is perhaps some negative transfer from Tamil resulting in the *will* form. There could be some sort of positive transfer from Marathi which favors the simple form.

Another positive influence might be number of additional languages spoken. Among the participants of this group, those who spoke more languages had more standard forms. Conversely, the ones who only spoke English in addition to their mother tongue exhibited less standard forms. Perhaps this increased language experience improves overall proficiency.

The number of years and quality of English-medium instruction could also have an effect on the acquisition of more standard English syntax. Private English-medium schools seem to be more beneficial than public vernacular-medium schools. An exception was found, however, with the two women from Mumbai who exhibited standard forms. They attended a private Malathi-medium school with English as a subject switching to English-medium after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Quality vs. quantity of instruction may be factor here.

Employment experience in contexts where English is used in an interactive setting may have a positive influence on developing more standard forms. Those participants who worked after earning their degrees tended to show more standard forms. English is used widely in India in areas of academia, government and commerce while other languages are often used in everyday life. Unless one has a job using English, there could be little opportunity for oral practice.

The results of the human subject research were enlightening. The study began with assumptions that certain non-standard forms existed. During the speaking task unexpected forms were found which proved to enrich the research. Factors which potentially could be influencing these forms were analyzed by comparing the speech

sample data with the questionnaire profile of each speaker. The anecdotal information gained through the group discussion helped to complete the analysis.

The Conclusion Chapter, which follows, places the results of the research in context of information gained in the Literature Review. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed and areas of further study are identified.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Central to the question of this study is the nature of Indian English itself, its features and influences. Indian English is a second language variety of English which is acquired in a pluralinguistic setting. Multiple language interference combined with a lack of opportunity for oral practice help to create a varietal spectrum of Indian English. In these circumstances, how could Indian English possibly not differ from British English? The differences are most likely due to efforts to simplify language acquisition. First language transfer and over-generalization can influence acquisition. These strategies can produce interlanguages which fossilize along the spectrum of Indian English.

Why do some speakers attain a variety higher on the spectrum while others fall lower? Educational and employment opportunities differ greatly in India, due in part to the legacy of the caste system. Those with access to superior educational opportunities (private English-medium schools which feed into English-medium universities) are more likely to enter professions which require the use of English on a regular basis. Those with little opportunity for education can only hope to have these professions. Their employment is of a lower level using the local language. For their English communication needs, a simplified variety of the language may be sufficient.

This broad examination of Indian English has led to the narrower study of a distinct grammar point: the non-standard expressions of the simple present tense. At the outset, these expressions included the progressive form as well as the *used to* construction. When comparing the progressive form with the simple form, one must

acknowledge morpheme acquisition order – the progressive is one of the earliest verb morphemes learned in SBE/NAE. According to Comrie (1976), the progressive is acquired before the simple form in all languages; it is a language universal. Using the present progressive to express habits and states could be a form of grammar over-generalization. This could provide further support for Comrie and others' hypothesis that the less marked form is generalized. It is unclear whether the Hindi use of the auxiliary for the simple present is transferred to English, but it may have a role in solidifying the generalized progressive form. One could assume that a speaker using the progressive in place of the simple form pervasively has had less English experience (education and oral practice in general). This assumption is supported by the results of the study: The research group consisted solely of highly educated women and there were few expressions of the progressive form when discussing habits and traditions.

The *used to* construction was slightly more prevalent than the progressive but appears to be more of a first language transfer than a generalization strategy. This would be true, also, for the *will* + infinitive construction which appeared unexpectedly. Yet, perhaps these first language transfers include aspect transfer as well as syntactical transfer. During the debriefing session of the research, some of the participants said that they didn't know there was any one correct verb form to use when talking about habits and states. This was reflected in some of the speech samples in which speakers used several forms indiscriminately. It is possible that the mother tongue has little or no morphological verb changes to express aspect. Although the concepts of aspect are universal, they are not always reflected in the grammar of a given language. There

appears to be more universality when it comes to stative verbs as the respondents were more likely to use the standard form with statives.

### Implications

There are pedagogical implications of this study. An Indian English speaker enrolled in an advanced level ESL class in the U.S. would exhibit many grammatical forms that would appear to be ‘ungrammatical’. It is important for the teacher to know why this is happening. The American ESL profession must be aware of nativized varieties of English and respect them as having linguistic integrity. In addition to Indian English, our ESL population speaks other nativized Englishes such as Liberian English and Nigerian English. Although the ‘mistakes’ are features of distinct varieties of English, they must be dealt with if a student wants to attain standard academic English. How can this best be approached pedagogically?

In order to help Indian students progress towards more standardized forms of NAE or SBE, it is important that they first be made aware of the differences between the varieties. Then, explicit instruction on English aspect is necessary. It cannot be assumed that the morphological changes of the English aspect system are similar to those of the learners’ first language. Students must understand that there is usually a preferred verb form to be used in NAE. However, some level of error should be accepted. Once the issue of aspect is addressed, the students need plenty of opportunity for communicative practice – something they perhaps lacked in their English classes or workplaces back home.

### Limitations

The limitations of the study are two-fold and involve the research group composition and the speaking task design. First, the homogeneity of the group, although in some ways ideal, limited the data collection. A group representing a range in proficiency levels would produce more varied data. Yet, it might be difficult to get lower level speakers – they are not usually the ones who come to the U.S. to work or with husbands who are working. The group was not only homogeneous but relatively small so the results cannot be generalized to a larger population.

The speaking task had limitations as well. In an effort to avoid modeling verb forms, the task was lightly structured with little control from the examiner. Thus, the amount of speech obtained from each participant varied depending on personality. Also, because the respondent was asked to talk about habits, hobbies and traditions, there was a tendency to list activities as nouns rather than use complete sentences. Some of the progressive utterances were indeed gerunds and could not be counted as true progressive forms. It was difficult to elicit a lot of stative verbs. The task should be redesigned to add more structure and control and better elicit stative verb forms.

### Further Study

The results of the research point to many factors potentially influencing the prevalence of non-standard syntactical features of Indian English. Further study might involve a wider variety of syntactical features with the same research group. Would the

same results be found? Is there a general proficiency element involved which can be generalized to other non-standard features? More study is needed on stative verb forms in order to draw conclusions as to the universality of states. It would be interesting to study more Malathi speakers from Mumbai (Bombay) to see if they indeed are more proficient than Tamil and Telegu speakers. If so, could vernacular-medium private schools provide some sort of advantage to learning English? This is a wider question involving issues of bilingual education.

The nature of Indian English as a nativized variety itself warrants further study. Although only 5% of India's population speaks English, the total is so great that it is the third largest English-speaking country in the world following the U.S. and the U.K. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1995). The Internet and global trade have made English the *lingua franca* of the world. India's large, highly-educated English speaking population is making its mark in the world with its own distinct variety of English: Indian English.

APPENDIX A

Participant Questionnaire

Factors Influencing the Grammatical Features of Indian English  
Questionnaire

Participant Number

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1. Where are you from in India?
2. What is your educational background?
3. What is your employment background?
4. How long have you been in the U.S.?
5. Have you ever lived in the U.S. before or in Britain?
6. What is your mother tongue?
7. What other languages do you speak fluently?
8. In India, in what situations do you use,

English?

Hindi?

Your mother tongue?

Other languages?

9. Describe your English language education experience.

When did you start learning English?

Did you go to a public or private school?

What were the predominant methods of instruction?

When did English-medium instruction begin and in what subjects?

10. In your opinion, is the English spoken in India different from the English spoken in Britain? If yes, describe some of the differences.

11. Is the English spoken in India different from the English spoken in the U.S.? If yes, describe some of the differences.

12. What are your family and friends' attitudes about the pervasiveness of English in India?

13. What are your biggest challenges in using English in the U.S.?

APPENDIX B  
Speaking Task Cue Cards

## **“CUE CARDS” for Speaking Task**

### **TRADITIONS**

- Beliefs
- Holidays
- Food
- Dress

### **HABITS**

- Daily Routine
- Hobbies
- Sports

## APPENDIX C

### Simple Present Information Sheet

## STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH Expressing States And The Habitual Present

When we talk about habitual actions and states of mind, we use the simple present form of the verb.

Habits: Every day I cook, I clean the house and I take a bath.

States: I have a brother, I know that man, I believe in God, I love to read.

My research was specifically studying the occurrence of different grammatical forms to express the habitual present and states of mind in Indian English. I refer to these as “non-standard forms” because they are not the same as what would be said in Standard American or British English. (SAE or BE)

The non-standard forms are:

1. **present progressive** – progressive means that the action is in progress. Since a habit is not in progress at the time of utterance, we don’t usually use the progressive form. In English, states have no beginning or end so cannot be in progress.

ex. Every day I am cooking, I am cleaning and I am taking a bath.  
I am having a work permit now, I am knowing something about that.

2. **”used to”** – this construction is not used at all in SAE to express habitual present. In fact, Americans will think you are speaking about something that happened previously on a regular basis but is no longer happening.

ex. Every day I used to cook, I used to clean...etc.

3. **The modal “will” + verb infinitive** – This usually refers to the future in SAE. We view habitual present as having no beginning and no end, therefore no future expression.

ex. Every day I will cook, I will clean, I will surf the net....

4. **The modal “will + BE + progressive verb form** – Usually means future action of continuous duration.

ex. Every day I will be cooking, I will be cleaning, I will be reading....

I’m wondering if these characteristics of Indian English have developed because of:

- Mother tongue influence?
- Hindi influence?
- Methods of English instruction?
- Contexts where English is used?

What are your opinions about each form?

**Do you think you view states and habitual present differently?**

APPENDIX D

Language Map of India



## APPENDIX E

## Speaking Task Transcription

### Speaking Task Transcription

(Stative verbs are underlined)

#1

#### **Habits**

get up, cook, push off, does not eat, he leaves, go sit down, have a cup a coffee, I don't get to eat, eat, I might see some movies, switch, comes on line, talk, varies, come on line, pay, browse, check my mails, feel hungry, take breakfast, I'll have to get ready and come here. I don't feel like doing anything, sit on the couch, watch the TV, doze off, don't cook, go scrub, laundry, I watch, I go to the gym, I used to go the gym, work a lot, spend, come back, call up, have dinner, don't do anything, I don't have a permit to work, I don't have a SSN, I have a lot of hobbies, sing, love, like to read, belongs, play, play, play, skip, like jumping, like to solve puzzle, like to sleep, love to sleep. I am not watching a lot of cricket, play cards, gamble, likes, sits and watches movies, we go around, don't even drive distances, we tend to go out a lot, go to the mall,

#### **Traditions**

Believe, believe, believe, etc. touch

#3

#### **Habits**

will chat, will take, will watch, will read, will help, have hobbies, will meet and talk, will watch and talk, will get together

#### **Traditions**

believe, believe, used to go, go, enjoy, take, use, wear, are wearing

#4

#### **Habits**

get up, leaves, used to prepare, I'll prepare, I'll be sitting I'll be relaxing, I'll start, I'll be cleaning, I'll be washing, I'll do, I'll take a bath and start preparing dinner, I'll be asking, has a good mood, I'll be telling, used to watch TV, likes, used to watch, used to laugh will be watching, I used to go and talk. I don't sleep. I go and talk with my friend, I will

be telling, we'll have our dinner, may talk, lives, make, I'll go and check, He takes, If he's having a good mood, he'll be working, they will be feeling, he feels, goes, comes back, feels, goes, comes, feels, will be having some time, we'll be talking and chatting, we used to check mails, I will show,

### **Traditions**

will think, will be doing, we used to do, will be maintaining, used to see, wear, serve, will be having more belief, they have a color, wear, used to wear, wear

#6

### **Habits**

includes, love, don't like, love, cook, spend time, do, read, love, love, know, don't know, love, have an interest towards music, sing, get up, cook, prepare, have breakfast, go out, spend time, have a lot of work

### **Traditions**

believe, do, pray, prepare, offer, do, have (a ritual), perform, offer, make, put, offer, take, have (the meal), eat, offer, perform

#7

### **Habits**

get up, make, make, come, go, talk, go out, comes, go, like, like, take, go, play, play, like,

### **Traditions**

starts, make, make, make, make, come together, believe, go, make, make, don't eat, eat, get, eat, make, use, use, use, wear, say,

#8

### **Habits**

goes, don't have a work authorization, give, comes, comes, cook, have lunch together, chat, chat, comes, go, love, go out, used to go out, like, used to go and we have a walk (go for a walk), teaches, knows, like, like, give, wants, want, like, read

**Traditions**

believe, have got, celebrate, take, goes, takes, worship, go, depends, like, distribute sweets, light, put, light, get, have traditions, get, have different sweets, have these sweets, make, follow, (Do you know everybody's caste?) yes we are knowing. speaks, takes, have many castes,

#9

**Habits**

*In India:* get up, finish, start, leave home, starts, work, have teaching hours, come, have lunch, have practical sessions, go, refresh, go, would relax, would start, start, teach, need, will see (make sure), go. *In the U.S.:* leaves, get up, make, goes, sit, browse, take, go out, work, would take, refresh, would start, would finish, would have lunch, would come, go, would see some people, would talk, while away my time, start, start, drive, go, listen, watch, would like to attend parties.

**Traditions**

differs, have different cultural traditions, change, originate, know, want, need, know, differ, use, make, put on weight, feel, concentrate, depends, happens, doesn't mean, don't take, say, believe, say, don't accept, believe, worship, worship.

#10

**Habits**

get up, leaves, surf, I'll do exercise, I'll be doing something like reading, I'll cook, I'll read, comes, we'll go out, I'll be penning down, works, work, doesn't have the laptop, I'll be penning down, I'll write, love, have inside plants, do crochet, go

**Traditions**

find, won't talk, think, they will believe, feel, believe, see, believe, give off, want, Software Companies they are having Saturdays and Sundays off, put, get, depends, love, love, have different dress, is wearing a sari, will have one white sari, will have different saris, will make, will wear

#11

**Habits**

get up, prepare, watch, exercise, surf , prepare, have homework helper, take, comes, go, come back, have dinner, watch TV, have at the U of M, practice, remove, play, play,

**Traditions**

comes, have these things, pray, pray, have to sacrifice, fast, fast, go, have these eight days, don't take, don't eat, find, do not kill, take, avoid, don't take, get married

#12

**Habits**

get up, I'll cook, I'll pack, I'll do exercise, I'll browse, I'll chat, has a kid, I speak, I'll take lunch, I will watch, I'll sleep, I'll go, I'll go, I have a lot of friends, we'll go out, I'll come back, I'll make, I'll prepare, we watch, we chat, he'll tell, we'll ring and speak, I'll hear music, like, I'll hear, I'll watch, have connection, I'll watch, I'll read, like, want, feel,

**Traditions**

have our own culture, go, has own idea, have a lot of gods, have a lot of religions, worship, eat, celebrate, get together, wear, we'll do crackers, we'll make, we'll chat, we enjoy, we'll go, we'll start, they're accepting, they are wearing jeans, they're not accepting it, they are wearing tightly, they're not accepting, they prefer, we'll pray, will start

#13

**Habits**

I'll listen, I'll listen, have hobbies, used to paint, used to make, I'll get up, I'll cook, I'll clean, I'll do cleaning, I'll make, I'll go, I'll take a bath, I'll hear some music, I'll have my lunch, I'll go, I'll spend some time and then come home, I'll come, I'll read, comes, I'll prepare, we'll have dinner, we'll talk, we'll go to bed, see cricket, watch, don't play

**Traditions**

have religious beliefs, is coming, will not mingle, will mingle, will see, will not see, We are celebrating. We used to go, they'll keep, they'll invite, they'll keep, they'll invite, they'll make, they'll give, they'll prepare. We used to wear Sari, they used to wear Pajamas.

#15

**Habits**

I'll go, I'll take, I have this yoga, pray, take, we will go to gym, we will come back, I'll prepare my lunch and take lunch, I go to sleep, he want, he don't want, he wants, I'll go, he'll come, I'll spend, we'll go to sleep, we will take, we will see, we will talk, we will go to sleep.

**Traditions**

have to wear sari, put, I'll go out, are helping me, he'll go and see the girl, means, it will predict, means, have in-laws, don't like, want, take

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Within adult and college ESL classes today there is a group of learners who should be given careful consideration since they differ fundamentally from others. These learners speak various 'nativized' Englishes which are in effect, second language varieties of English. One of these nativized varieties is Indian English, spoken by students from India. Unlike students from other countries, Indian students come already 'fluent' in English. Their form of English, however, contains many non-standard features which could be marked as mistakes in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Some of these non-standard features are grammatically syntactic in nature, often concerning issues of tense and aspect. One of the non-standard tense/aspect features noticeable to English native speakers is the expression of the simple present tense. Indian English speakers often use the present progressive instead of the simple present for habits and states, and sometimes will substitute the *used to* construction for habits. When an Indian English speaker uses these forms in the U.S., the listener is momentarily distracted by the non-standard form and is struck by how 'foreign' the speaker sounds. The purpose of this paper is to study the pervasiveness of and the potential factors

influencing the non-standard manifestations of the simple present tense of Indian English in oral production in order to understand how to best approach instruction.

I first became interested in Indian English a few years ago when I was involved in an outreach teaching assignment for my Adult Basic Education Consortium. The assignment was to teach a 16-week ESL class onsite for a group of Indian women living in the same apartment complex. They had all signed up for English classes, and yet they already knew English; they had graduated from English-medium universities. Although proficient in English, they still had areas which needed improvement – pronunciation and oral fluency in particular. As we worked on these areas, I noticed several unusual verb forms being used. After a few weeks, I realized that most of the students were making the same ‘mistakes.’ These mistakes were minor but strange. Of particular interest to me was their expression of the simple present. They seemed to use various verb forms indiscriminately where native speakers would use the simple present. The most common non-standard form was the use of present progressive for simple present such as: *I am watching TV every afternoon. I am having a work visa now.* Occasionally, the habitual present would be expressed with *used to*: *I used to cook every night* (present habit). As a listener, I paused and thought, “Why did she say it that way? If she graduated from an English-medium university, why is she talking like this?”. This was my initial burning question. I wondered how I would correct errors made by ‘fluent’ English speakers without offending them.

Indian speakers of English may not be aware that they are speaking a variety of English different from Standard British or North American English (SBE/NAE). They

may think that their errors are individual rather than systemic. Although Indian English is an acceptable variety of English, a student enrolled in an ESL class should know that SBE/NAE differs from Indian English in some ways. One can assume that students who understand the non-standard features of their English variety can more easily attain proficiency in SBE/NAE. Also, students who want to have more 'native-like' speech can benefit from this awareness.

In the future, ESL professionals will encounter more and more students who speak indigenized varieties of English. Indian immigration levels are rising as globalization becomes a reality. Students from countries like Liberia also speak an indigenized variety of English. Because these students have already acquired a different variety of English, their needs are different from those of other students learning English. Teachers need to be aware of the differences and adapt instruction accordingly. They must do this while acknowledging the value of the indigenized variety of English spoken by their students.

In order to gather relevant data to inform instruction for Indian students, my research question was defined further: How pervasive are the non-standard oral expressions of the simple present tense? To what extent do the speakers use the simple present tense form? Is there a difference between expressing states and habits? These questions formed the basis for my primary research in which a small group of Indian English speakers participated in an audio-taped speaking task which targeted stative and habitual verbs. Present tense verbs were transcribed and categorized according to type and form. Information gained from a background questionnaire was integrated to

determine possible influences. This data was augmented by information gained in a group debriefing discussion. It is important to note that the results apply only to the specific research group and cannot be generalized. Yet, information gained in this study increases awareness of features and factors influencing Indian World English.

Students from India come to ESL classes speaking Indian English, a nativized variety of English, with non-standard tense/aspect features. It is beneficial to the student as well the instructor to understand the nature of Indian English and factors influencing its features. These issues are explored in Chapter Two, the Literature Review, which follows. The Literature Review provides background information on the role English has played and continues to play in Indian society. Indian English as a nativized variety is then examined in terms of second language acquisition and tense/aspect features.

Although much research has been done on defining grammatical features of Indian English, little research has been done on the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the simple present tense in oral production. It is this issue in particular that forms the basis for my primary research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

In effort to study the non-standard expression of the simple present tense by speakers of Indian English, one must understand English in India. Background information on the culture and indigenous languages is crucial to understanding the environment in which the English language has permeated the subcontinent. The non-standard features of Indian English have developed as a result of nativization of the language and are not exhibited uniformly. There are several versions of Indian English spoken which fall along a spectrum – from pidgin at one end to SBE at the other end. This nativized variety of English has been influenced by a combination of factors including first language transfer, context for use, and educational practices. Indian English differs from SBE in pronunciation, lexicon, syntax. Of the syntactical features, tense and aspect deviations are particularly prevalent.

### Indian Culture

Language in India is closely tied to the culture. Hinduism, practiced by the majority of the population, has had a major influence on Indian culture. Integral to Hindu beliefs is the caste system from the “untouchables” at the bottom to the Brahmans at the top. Individuals stay in the caste of their birth and usually do not marry outside of it (Henderson, 2002). Although the caste system is officially outlawed in India, it is deeply ingrained in the society and continues to be hegemonic. Language use in India is highly connected to caste and can limit educational and employment opportunities.

## Language History of India

### Indigenous Languages

India is a country with great language diversity. Five language families are represented: Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-European, Malayo-Polynesian and Sino-Tibetan. These language groups are regional with cultural ties to neighboring countries. There are over 3,000 mother tongues which can be classified into 110 different languages (Henderson, 2002). Fifteen of these languages are official regional languages (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002). The majority of the population speaks Dravidian or Indo-European languages which are found in the south and north, respectively (Henderson, 2002). Region notwithstanding, lower caste groups have the most divergent languages and are linguistically isolated from the higher castes (Southworth, 1978).

Historically, standard language forms of these indigenous languages were kept from the lower castes – a form of language hegemony. The higher, educated castes had access to the written form while the lower castes remained illiterate (Henderson, 2002). Initially, literacy was solely for religious texts. The Brahmans, considered to be the highest and most pure caste, were the only ones educated to read the religious texts. In ancient times, these texts were written in Sanskrit, which was a non-native language for all who learned it (Southworth, 1978). Thus, early on, academic language was limited to the elite class. To some extent, this is still true today. When discussing language use in India, it is important to consider factors affected by caste such as educational opportunities.

Hindustani eventually replaced Sanskrit as the language of the literate classes with Hindustani Urdu as the first genuine supragregional language in India (Southworth, 1978). By the late nineteenth century, Hindustani had become the *lingua franca* of India. Hindustani is primarily the spoken form of the language with Urdu and Hindi as written forms. Urdu is used by the Muslim population and Hindi is used by Hindus (*The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, 1975). Hindi's lexicon has many Persian and Arabic loanwords from Urdu. In modern India, efforts have been made to remove these Urdu influences from Hindi. Today, Hindi and English are the two official languages covering all of India (Henderson, 2002). English has officially been given "associate status" in India (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002).

### The Origins of English

The introduction of English to India came primarily with British colonization in 1757. The British East India Company first initiated English-medium instruction in private schools in 1823. There were, however, some who opposed discontinuing vernacular-medium instruction at this point. An Oriental-Anglicist controversy ensued which ended ultimately in 1835 when "Macaulay's Minute" was passed advocating English-medium instruction throughout India. English-speaking educated people were needed to work as clerks in government posts in India and it was hoped that they would serve as interpreters between the British and those they ruled. Gradually, English spread and by 1928 was the language of administration and the pan-Indian press. English then became the language of the elite. Although official British rule ended in India in 1947, the English language has remained deeply ingrained in the elite class (Kachru, 1983).

### English in India Today

Most educated Indians today speak three or more languages which include their mother tongue, Hindi and English (Tully, 1997). Currently, India has a “three language formula” in its educational system which helps linguistically unite the plurilingual country. English, Hindi and the regional language are the three languages which are compulsory subjects in school (Khubchandani, 1994). If Hindi is the regional language, then another regional language is chosen so that there are still three languages required (Tully, 1997). Initially, a two-language policy (Hindi and the regional language) was proposed by the Indian government, but the southern states strongly objected to the selection of Hindi, as their languages are primarily Dravidian. A compromise was to add English as a third language (Krishnaswamy & Sriraman, 1995). Hindi is thus the common language of the north, while English linguistically unites the south.

English has replaced Hindi, however, as the ‘lingua franca’ of India. It is the language of government, higher education and commerce. Thus, there are more speakers of English in urban areas than there are in rural areas. In educated Indian society, English is the dominant language. This dominance can be seen in the relatively large number of books published in English. Hindi, one of five most widely spoken languages in the world, is far less published in India than English is. Although English is the dominant language, a low percentage (5% estimate) of the population can speak it (Tully, 1997). Still, this five percent represents more than 50 million English speakers in India out of a total population of over one billion people (*The CIA World Factbook*, 2002).

### Indian English – A Nativized Variety

The English language is deeply rooted in India. Yet, it is its own English, differing from that of its 'parent' country Britain. Indian English, a sub-category of South Asian English, is considered a variety of English. There are several non-standard features of Indian English when compared with SBE/NAE. These features are not mistakes, but rather innovations common to a 'nativized' (Kachru, 1986) or 'indigenized' (S. Sridhar and K. Sridhar, 1994) variety of English. Kachru (1986) refers to Indian English as nativized because the language has been highly influenced by the many indigenous languages spoken in the country at the same time as its use was limited.

In India, English did not and does not exist in a monolingual setting as it did in the American Colonies, Australia and New Zealand. In those cases, the indigenous languages were pushed aside and English had free rein. The British Colonial government played a role in indigenizing Indian English as well by limiting the amount of English education in order to maintain a linguistic distance between the rulers and those being ruled. In the early colonial days, pidgin English was prevalent and even encouraged over SBE. Today there is a spectrum of Englishes spoken in India which is determined by the speaker's caste and occupation. The spectrum goes from pidgin on one end to standard English at the other end. At the middle is standard Indian English, the most commonly spoken variety (Kachru, 1983).

When considering the varietal nature of Indian English, it is important to note that English in India is primarily a second language (additional language). Few in India speak English as their native language. The acquisition of English, in general, lacks uniformity.

There is a great qualitative difference between public and private schools in India. There is also a difference between regions as the indigenous languages influence teaching methods. Throughout all of India, the focus of instruction is on the written form with little emphasis on speaking (Kachru, 1986). With little opportunity for oral practice in an academic setting, it is not surprising that Indian English has evolved as its own distinct variety of English.

Indian English is characterized by distinct differences in phonology, lexicon, and syntax. Phonological differences are due to the interference of indigenous languages and exacerbated by the lack of oral practice. Lexical distinctions are also from indigenous language influence such as *tiffin-carrier* – ‘a carrier for a snack or lunch’ (Kachru, 1986 p.28). The lexicon includes Indian words transferred directly such as: *kampon* – ‘a small settlement,’ and *makan* – ‘food’ (Kachru, 1983 p.28), and those translated into English such as *twice born* and *dining-leaf* (Kachru, 1983 p.80). Syntactical differences are numerous and include: reduplication – *I have some small, small things* (Kachru, 1983 p.79), subject/number verb agreement – *Women was treated as the Goddess...* (S. Sridhar, 1993 p.5) and common use of auxiliary verbs – *I am doing* for *I do* (Kachru, 1983 p.34). The tendency towards auxiliary verbs is directly related to the subject of this paper. One of the non-standard forms used to express the simple present is the progressive form which involves the use of an auxiliary.

### Non-Standard Expressions of the Simple Present

In Indian English, two non-standard constructions are used to express habits and states. These are the present progressive (*Every day I am cooking*) and *used to* (*Every day I used to cook*) forms. These forms are sometimes used when the simple form (*Every day I cook*) is used in SBE/NAE (Kachru, 1986). The development of the use of these forms has two possible explanations: first language transfer and over-generalization of grammar. First language transfer is considered a major factor influencing the syntactical features of Indian English (Kachru, 1983, 1986; S. Sridhar & K. Sridhar, 1994). First language transfer involves the transfer of some native language features to the language being learned, in this case, English. This transfer can be either a positive or negative transfer in its effect on acquisition. Transfer is an effective simplification strategy for second language acquisition in a plurilingual society with few native-English speakers. Yet, because of the limitations of acquisition, the features could also be a result of grammar over-generalization (Verma, 1994). Over-generalization occurs when the grammatical features mastered previously in language acquisition are generalized to new material. It is realistic to assume that the syntactical variations of Indian English may be caused by a combination of first language transfer and over-generalization of grammar.

#### First Language Transfer

In exploring possible indigenous language influences, it was prohibitive to study a representative number of languages, given the number of indigenous languages in India. In order to limit the analysis, Hindi was chosen because it is spoken by the majority of Indians and is a compulsory school subject. Hindi examples are taken from *Hindi*

*Grammar and Reader* (Bender, 1967). As stated earlier in this chapter, there is a tendency toward the use of auxiliaries in Indian English. When examining the simple present tense of Hindi, one finds that the BE auxiliary is used in its construction. The language is S-O-V order with the auxiliary verb in sentence-final position. The simple present is expressed: Subject – (Object)– Verb – Auxiliary BE as in (1) and (2).

(1) *Vah çtç hai*

vah	+	çtç	+	hai
he (-S.NOM)		come (V-pres part -masc 3ps)		is (aux 3ps present)
'He comes.'				

(2) *Bill\* s ,t\* hai*

bill*	+	s ,t*	+	hai
cat (-S.NOM)		sleep (V-pres part -fem 3ps)		is (aux 3ps present)
'The cat sleeps.'				

In SBE/NAE, simple present verbs are formed with no auxiliary. One could conclude, then, that there might be first language transfer in this case.

The progressive aspect in Hindi is more involved. The construction is formed by reducing the verb to its stem and inserting an inflected past participle of *rahna* (which indicates continuation) before the BE auxiliary as in (3) – (5).

(3) *Vah ç rahç hai*

Vah	+	ç	+	rahç	+
he (-S.NOM)		come (V-stem)		in the process of (V-masc 3ps past part)	

hai

is (aux-3ps present)

‘He is coming.’

(4) *Bill\* fars'-par s, rah\* hai*

bill\* + fars'-par + s, +  
 cat (-S.NOM) on the floor (prep phrase) sleep (V-stem)

rah\* + hai  
 in the process of (V-fem 3ps past part) is (aux-3ps present)

‘The cat is sleeping on the floor.’

(5) *Vidyçrth\* kitçb parh rahç hai*

vidyçrth\* + kitçb + parh +  
 student (-S.NOM) book (-NOM) read (V-stem)

rahç + hai  
 in the process of (V-masc 3ps past part) is (aux-3ps present)

‘The student is reading a book.’

The progressive is a more complex construction in Hindi than in English with the addition of the continuation agent. One could assume then that the speakers understand the nature of English aspect and are not transferring Hindi progressive features to English simple present. They are transferring the auxiliary from Hindi simple present. This rationale, however, is not necessarily true for stative verbs.

In Hindi, stative verbs such as *sunna* ‘to hear’ and *dekhna* ‘to see.’ which in English require the simple present, can be expressed with the progressive aspect (Kachru, 1983). Here the divergent form could be caused by different aspect rules for stative verbs rather than negative transfer of the auxiliary.

In addition to the present progressive, *used to* is a non-standard construction used in place of the simple form when talking about habits. In Hindi, the habitual present can be expressed with a form which can be translated as *used to* and means *accustomed to*. This form involves the use of the inflected past participle of *karna* which is inserted between the verb and the BE auxiliary, as in (6).

(6) *Vah har r , z kuch na kuch parhϕ kart\* hai*

vah	+	har r , z	+	kuch na kuch	+	
She (S-nom)		every day (adv)		something or other (DO-nom)		
parhϕ	+	kart*	+		+	hai
read (V-infinitive)		custom (V-fem. 3ps past participle)				is (aux- 3ps present)
‘She is used to reading something or other everyday.’						

In SBE/NAE, This form relates to a present habit: *I am used to cooking dinner every night*. Indian English, however, deletes the BE auxiliary and reduces the verb to its stem: *I used to cook dinner every night*. Although conveying a present habit is still intended, the utterance is misunderstood by native English speakers as a habit no longer practiced.

### Grammar Generalization

Indian English is a second language variety of English and thus would have been affected by acquisition order principles. The various Englishes along the Indian English spectrum could be considered various interlanguages. The non-standard verb forms used for the simple present could be due to *over-generalization*, an acquisition strategy. As Larsen-Freeman (1983) notes, learners memorize common patterns before understanding the constituent parts and they tend to over-generalize those patterns. The learner neutralizes the distinction between marked and unmarked forms, and major systems and subsystems. Thus, the utterance, *I am having a new car*, could be an example of over-generalization of the progressive form (Verma, 1994).

The morpheme studies done by Dulay and Brown in 1973 (as cited in Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1983) on children learning English as a second language established an order of acquisition of verb forms in which the present progressive was one of the earlier forms mastered (2 of 8). Third person singular was acquired much later (7 of 8). Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1983) duplicated the study with adults and found the progressive form to be the earliest form mastered. These authors note that the simple present tense involves the third person singular *s* which is acquired much later.

Agnihotri, Khanna and Mukherjee (1994) did a study to determine an implicational order of difficulty in the use of tenses in English for Indian English speakers. In their study, students classified as good, average or poor were tested with a closed-ended format to complete sentences with the correct tense and aspect. In all there were 32 tense/aspect combinations tallied. The present progressive was mastered well

before the present indefinite for habitual actions. Thus, the progressive used in place of the simple form could very well be due to over-generalization.

### English Tense and Aspect – Simple Present

A discussion of possible explanations for the syntactical differences of Indian English would not be complete without exploring issues of ‘aspect’. In the two previous sections, first language transfer and generalization were listed as possible factors. Aspect issues can stem from either of these areas. Perhaps the speaker is transferring aspect rules from the first language or generalizing English aspect rules for simplification. Even though the concept of aspect has a universal presence in all languages, it is not always manifested in the morphology as it is in English. Some languages have no overt aspect morphemes (Smith, 1997). Thus, if the first language does not differentiate aspect syntactically, a learner might not understand the importance of the morphological distinctions of English aspect. The learner may see no difference between using the simple form and the progressive form. Not all languages with a progressive form use the form exclusively – the use can be optional (Comrie, 1976).

The tense and aspect system used for English verb formation is complex. Tense is more easily learned than aspect because it fits neatly into three categories: past, present and future. It is temporal – the utterance time relative to the event time. Aspect, however, relates to the manner in which the event is occurring, the degree of completeness. There are two ‘viewpoints’ to aspect: the perfective and the imperfective. The perfective (simple) viewpoint is complete – it involves the entire event while the

imperfective shows the event in progress with the progressive form of the verb. Of the two viewpoints, the imperfective is mastered before the perfect because it is less specific, thus unmarked (Smith, 1997). This order of aspect acquisition could lead to the generalization of imperfective forms to perfective events which would explain the use of the progressive form in place of the simple form.

According to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.117), the present progressive is used in the following situations:

- a. activity in progress - *He is attending a meeting now.*
- b. extended present - *I'm studying geology at the University of Colorado.*  
(action will end)
- h. temporary situation – *Phyllis is living with her parents.*
- i. repetition of actions – *Henry is kicking the soccer ball around the yard.*
- j. express future w/time adverbial – *She's coming tomorrow.*
- k. emotional comment / present habit – *He's forever acting up at these affairs.*
- l. a change in progress – *She's becoming more and more like her mother.*

The simple present tense is the perfective viewpoint in the present tense. A limitation of the present tense is that it may not include any end points of situations. (If there were end points, the past tense would be implied.) The imperfective viewpoint is easily understood as having no end points by its progressive nature. However, the perfective viewpoint, in its goal to show completion, is limited to situation types that are stative or habitual. States have no ending, so no end point can be shown. Habits are considered to be statives because there is a pattern of events representing a state held

consistently over a period of time (Smith, 1997). Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.113, p.120) list in detail the situations in which the simple present tense is used in English:

- e. habitual acts in the present – *He walks to school every day.*
- f. timeless truths – *Water freezes at 0 degrees centigrade.*
- g. *be* and other stative verbs
  - Sensory perception – e.g. *smell, see, hear, taste, feel*  
*I smell something burning in the kitchen.*
  - Mental perception – e.g. *know, believe, think, understand, mean, doubt*  
*She understands the principles of photosynthesis.*
  - Possession – e.g. *possess, have, own, belong*  
*I have an allergy to cats.*
  - Emotions, attitudes, opinions – e.g. *like, love, hate, desire, need, want*  
*The boy needs new clothes.*
  - Measurement – e.g. *equal, measure, weigh, cost*  
*The shoes cost a lot of money.*
  - Relationship – e.g. *contain, entail, consist of*  
*Their antique collection contains many valuable pieces.*
  - Description – e.g. *be, resemble, sound, appear, seem, look*  
*The baby seems hungry.*
- h. In the subordinate clauses of time or condition with future-time adverbial –  
*After he finishes work, he'll do errands.*
- e. Express future/future-time adverbial – *I have a meeting next Wednesday.*
- f. Present event/action – *Now I add three eggs to the mixture.*
- g. Present speech acts – *I resign from the commission.*
- h. Historical present – *So he stands up in the boat and waves his arms.*

For the purposes of this paper, the uses of the simple present were limited to habitual acts in the present and states. The other situations involve future and past tense references using a present form, which is not within the scope of this paper.

There are times when the progressive form is used to express habits and states. These can be considered exceptions. When the progressive is combined with habitual meaning, it is implied that the repetition takes place over a limited period (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985, p.199):

- (7) *The professor types his own letters.* (The habit is permanent.)
- (9) *The professor is typing his own letters while his secretary is ill.*  
(The habit is temporary.)

There are exceptions to using the progressive for states as well. Quirk et al. (1985) state that this is usually an indication that the verb is being reclassified as dynamic – as with process or agentivity. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.121) categorizes progressive stative use as follows:

- j. intensify emotion – *I'm hating this assignment*
- k. indicate current behavior – *He's being rude.*
- l. introduce change in states – *I'm understanding less and less about life the older I get.*
- m. show limited duration – *Are you understanding it this?*
- n. emphasize conscious involvement – *What we are seeing is a red dwarf star.*
- o. show vividness – *One night in the middle of the night, I'm hearing dripping.*
- p. express politeness – *Are you liking it?*
- q. mitigate criticism – *I like the first piano notes, but I'm not liking it when the strings come in.*

r. avoid imposition – *I was just wanting to invite you to a gathering...*

These exceptional uses of the progressive for statives are very nuanced and would be acquired later by a second language learner. The assumption was made for this study that any progressive habitual and stative utterances were not likely to be any of these exceptional forms and were more likely to be non-standard features of Indian English.

### Previous Research

#### English Instruction in India

One would think that, given the three-language education policy of India, more than 5% of the population would have command of the English language. One explanation for this limitation can be found in India's hegemonic system of instruction. The elite schools, which are attended by higher castes, tend to be English-medium instruction, while lower caste schools offer vernacular-medium English instruction. In addition, the methods of teaching English greatly differ in that the lower caste schools stress literature, memorization and grammar translation rather than more communicative practices (Tully, 1997). This inconsistency can explain in part, the spectrum of Indian English varieties spoken

V. Ramanathan (1999, 2002) has done two studies which explore the inequities of English education in India. V. Ramanathan (1999) tracked students from various secondary schools in their first year of University and found that University students from lower caste secondary schools had difficulty keeping up with those who had

attended higher caste schools. The lower group's English instruction had not prepared them for higher level classes or for occupations requiring English.

V. Ramanathan (2002) also analyzed state-mandated vernacular-medium and English-medium textbooks and found them to be highly divergent. The educational system in India is centralized at the state level with little room for individual teacher autonomy. There is a set textbook curriculum which must be followed. Both ends of the educational spectrum are therefore limited to textbook-based language instruction with an emphasis on grammar. One of the differences between vernacular-medium and English-medium textbooks was in what was expected of the students. The English-medium textbooks required more independence and critical thinking than the vernacular-medium textbooks, thus assuming higher expectations for the students. The content of the readings in the textbooks varied as well. Vernacular-medium content is focused on life skills whereas English-medium content is more anglo-focused, drawing from literary texts. Thus survival English is considered adequate for vernacular students. There is an assumption that those students will never progress to higher levels of education and employment.

Although communicative instructional methods are used in English-medium schools, they are lacking in substance and degree of use. H. Ramanathan and Bruning (2002) studied teachers in a large private English-medium school and found that oral and listening skills were not given much importance in the classroom. Teachers cited several factors which contributed to this tendency: large classes, test-driven curriculum, parents' low-level of education and the predominance of native language. Given that most

English teachers are not native speakers of English, students get little oral practice with a native speaker (S. Sridhar & K. Sridhar, 1994). The combination of these factors may contribute to the divergent nature of Indian English.

#### Non-Standard Syntactical Features

Major studies dealing with the acceptability of these non-standard forms include Patnaik and Geetha (1994) and Parasher (1994). Patnaik and Geetha obtained opinions on various forms in an effort to determine features of standard Indian English. The respondents had a good command of English and included college and university teachers of English and other subjects as well as executives and journalists in India. Their task was to look at fifteen pairs of sentences containing auxiliaries and mark if they were identical in meaning or not and why. However, as the survey was incomplete, the results of a subset of the group and only three pairs of sentences were published in this report. The results were based on data collected from fifty university English teachers who were given the following present tense to evaluate (p.225):

(9) *My watch works perfectly*

(10) *My watch is working perfectly*

The results of the limited data collected in the survey were that the respondents correctly discerned the different meanings of the two sentences. Thus it was concluded that the non-standard use of the present progressive for the simple present was not a standard feature of Indian English. However, these results do not reflect the general educated population. The results were skewed because English teachers are trained to discern differences in aspect, and given time to examine written data, can correctly

identify meaning according to SBE. Therefore, the findings are inconclusive. The report omitted comments on possible skewing of results and was remiss in doing so. The data on the other subgroups is likely to be more representative of the population.

Parasher's (1994) study reflects a more representative sample of Indian English using authentic writing samples. Writing samples were collected from two organizations: a nationalized bank and a research institute and were comprised of letters and reports sent out and received. The study's purpose was two-fold: first, to determine non-standard features of Indian English and second, to assess acceptability of these features from three points of view – native speakers of SBE, NAE, and Indian English (university English teachers). Parasher collected data on syntax, lexis and style. Within the syntax category a subcategory of 'tense and aspect' was established. The six participants (two of each viewpoint) were asked to read through the various business letters and mark any unacceptable expressions within context. The following are examples taken from the data collected (Prasher, 1994 p.153).

- Present progressive in place of simple present

(11) *We are manufacturing a malted food...*

Indian English speakers accepted this use while SBE and NAE rejected it.

- Stative verbs

(12) *The applicant is having 15 years' experience.*

All three groups rejected this in favor of simple present.

- Habitual

The use of *used to* for repetitive activity was unacceptable to all three groups. (no examples given)

Parasher has determined that the above features are common in Indian English yet are not considered by all as acceptable. All groups agreed that the stative progressive and the *used to* construction were unacceptable. The Indian English group did not, however, object to the non-stative progressive.

### Conclusion

There is little research done on oral production of non-standard grammatical features of Indian English. Oral production, as compared to written, does not allow the luxury of time to evaluate and correct forms and is thus a more realistic indicator of the variety of English spoken in India. Therefore, my research focused on oral expressions of the simple present in order to test for the following non-standard features: present progressive used in place of the simple present, the expression of stative verbs, and the use of *used to* for habituality.

The Methods Chapter, which follows, outlines the research methodology used to answer the question: How pervasive are the non-standard oral expressions of the simple present tense by speakers of Indian English and what are the potential factors influencing these features?

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Introduction

This research study was an effort to understand the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the imperfect present by a small group of Indian English speakers. The goals of the research were to determine what verb forms are used most often by these individuals when discussing habits and states and to find the potential factors having either a positive or negative influence towards 'standard' production. Possible explanations for the syntactical differences of Indian World English were addressed previously in the literature review and include first language interference, grammar generalization (simplification) and English instructional methods. Background information related to these factors was gathered on each participant through a written questionnaire. This provided a language and education profile for each speaker and later was used in the analysis of the speech sample. The speech sample was obtained during a speaking task which elicited the targeted verb forms. Anecdotal information gathered during the ensuing group debriefing and discussion session was integrated into the analysis. These three elicitation techniques – written questionnaire, individual speech sample and group discussion – provide a varied approach for exploring the research question.

### Research Subjects

The research group used for this study is comprised of a fairly homogenous group of 12 women from India. All in their twenties, they live in the same apartment complex. Their husbands are all employed by the same Indian contracting company. The women

are university educated from the upper castes of Indian society. They differ, however, in their mother tongue and additional languages spoken. Although they have received formal education in English, they have little opportunity to use it here because they are not in the workforce. They tend to speak their various Indian languages with their friends and husbands. They are not currently enrolled in ESL classes but agreed to participate in this study which was part of a six-session rhythm and intonation class taught onsite.

## Data Collection

### Questionnaire

The purpose of the written questionnaire (see Appendix A) was to gain information that would serve as a foundation upon which to examine the speaking task data. Factors which could influence the acquisition of standard English grammar were the focus of the questions. The questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to the following: language background, educational and employment experience, length of time in the U.S. and perceptions about Indian World English. There were 13 questions in all which ranged from closed questions such as “What is your mother tongue?” to open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of English in India. Answers to the discrete questions were designed so they could easily be compiled in a chart that would be used for comparison. Although the group of participants was fairly homogeneous, information from the questionnaire differentiated them. The open-ended questions provided supporting information. There was opportunity to discuss the questionnaire with each participant during the speaking task.

### Speaking Task

Indian World English differs from SBE/NAE in several grammatical features. Among these features is the verb form used for the perfective viewpoint in the present tense. While native English speakers use the simple form (*Every night I cook dinner*), Indian English includes alternate forms such as the present progressive (*Every night I am cooking dinner*) and the *used to* construction (*Every night I used to cook dinner*). Note: *used to* is intended to convey present habit, not past. In general, the differences between the Indian English variety and SBE/NAE are not fixed and speakers fall within a spectrum: from pidgin at one end to SBE at the other end (Kachru, 1983). The aim of this study was to find if there were prevalence and patterns of use of the various verb forms with this particular group of subjects.

The speaking task was designed to elicit present tense verb forms with the perfective viewpoint. In SBE/NAE, present tense sentences cannot show end points. The present imperfective aspect shows continuation, while the present perfective aspect shows no end at all (Smith 1997). Habits and states have no end point – they are ongoing. The habitual act of *I drive to work every day* has no foreseeable end– it happened yesterday, today and will happen tomorrow. The mental state of knowledge fits the same definition – *I know how to sew* assumes that it will be forever so. The speaking task of the study was designed to elicit these habitual and stative verbs.

In designing the speaking task, there were considerations as to the method of implementation. It would be possible for the examiner to unintentionally model the targeted verb form while asking questions or clarifying. Saying “What do you do

everyday?” might elicit more simple forms, while asking, “What are you doing every day?” might elicit the progressive form. In order to avoid this skewing, two cue cards were developed that listed general topics (see Appendix B). One was titled “Habits” and included the sub-topics of daily routine, hobbies, and sports. The other card was titled “Traditions” and included beliefs, holidays, food and dress. During the audio-taped one-on-one session, the participant was simply asked to talk freely about the topics listed on the cards. There was little response from the examiner in an effort to limit modeling of verb forms.

Both cards targeted habitual and stative verb forms. When talking about the cue card topics, standard simple present habitual responses would be: *I take the bus to work* (routine), *I sew* (hobbies), *I play tennis* (sports), *I pray* (beliefs), *We light candles* (holidays), *We eat special food* (food), and *We wear saris* (dress). The stative verbs targeted were narrowed down to three types – mental perception (*know, believe, think, understand*), possession (*possess, have, own, belong*) and emotions, attitudes and opinions (*like, love, want, desire, need, feel*). Any of the speaking topics could elicit stative verb responses. Examples in the standard simple form are: *I like to read* (hobbies), *I think you should exercise* (sports), *We believe in God* (beliefs), and *We have a special festival* (holidays).

#### Group Debriefing and Discussion Session

During the questionnaire and the speaking task, the participants had not been aware of the specific purpose of the study. The debriefing session was thus a way to unveil the research question and in turn broaden their awareness of the syntactical

differences between Indian English and SBE/NAE. An information sheet (see Appendix C) was distributed which explained the simple present tense for habit and states and listed the various verb forms elicited by the group. This formed a framework for general discussion. The group was asked what could be influencing the use of non-standard verb forms – was it mother tongue, Hindi, education, or contexts of use? The discussion was audio-taped and later transcribed.

### Data Analysis

The aim of the analysis was to record the verb utterances, find patterns and compare with participant profiles in order to find possible influences. Data collected from the three elicitation methods was integrated for the analysis. Transcriptions of the audio-taped speech samples included present tense verb forms only. The BE copula was omitted. The verb forms were categorized as to type and the totals were entered into a table. The table contains the total number of verb utterances for each verb type separated out by stative and non-stative verbs. A pie chart was made for each participant which showed the combination and prevalence of verb forms used. This served as a visual for comparing participants to one another. They were then categorized by their preferred verb form: simple, non-standard, and no preference. This categorization enabled comparison by cross-checking the participant profile.

The questionnaire information formed a profile for each participant. The information was compiled into a chart for easy comparison. The main chart headings were, mother tongue, additional languages, English education, degree(s), employment

experience and length of time in the U.S.. Each participant's speech sample data was interfaced with her profile and each preference group was then compared to find possible influences. What were the factors that had a positive influence towards more 'standard' forms? In turn, what were the negative influences? Were stative verbs treated differently than non-stative verbs?

Finally, anecdotal information gathered from the group discussion was used to augment the findings. The participants' comments about the different verb forms and their usage provided clues as to possible influences. It was important also, to integrate qualitative information on perceptions and acceptability of standard vs. non-standard forms. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data provided a comprehensive view of the results which sought to be a fair representation of the English language profile of each participant.

### Conclusion

In order to research the pervasiveness of non-standard expressions of the simple present tense by Indian English speakers, a certain amount of raw data was required for analysis. This data required the support of other related information in order to complete the analysis. The elicitation techniques developed for this study were both qualitative and quantitative and ranged in the amount of control. The questionnaire was a combination of discrete and open-ended questions which, along with the group discussion, were qualitative methods. The speaking task was loosely structured so that the participant could speak freely, yet the results were quantifiable. The quantitative

analysis of the speaking task provided the crucial data that formed an interface with the other tools. The three methods combined in an effort to find factors which potentially influence this non-standard syntactical feature of Indian English.

Although the results can only be attributed to this specific research group, the data obtained can be further studied for pedagogical implications. If the non-standard forms are pervasive enough, explicit instruction on the imperfect aspect verb forms would be beneficial for Indian World English speakers.

The following chapter reports the findings of the research. The data from the speaking task is analyzed and interpreted based on information from the questionnaire and group debriefing session. The potential factors influencing the speaking profiles are explored for each participant with an effort to identify possible trends.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study took place over a two-week period and involved a variety of elicitation techniques. To begin with, the twelve participants were given written questionnaires to answer. The information gathered from this questionnaire helped to create a language profile of each participant and formed a foundation for the study. The questionnaire was followed by individual audio-taped speech samples. The beginning of these sessions consisted of an informal conversation on the completed questionnaire. This was followed by a speaking task whereby the participant was given a cue card and asked to talk about the topics on the card. There were two cue cards – one for habits and one for traditions. This was an effort to elicit the habitual and stative present verb forms, respectively. When all of the participants had completed the individual audio-taping, a group debriefing and discussion was conducted. This was also audio-taped. Field notes were inconsequential and thus are not included. All of the above elicitation techniques were used to gather information to make links between language profile and the preferred form for expressing habits and states.

### Questionnaire

The written questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of thirteen questions regarding language, education and employment backgrounds. A compilation of the answers to the most pertinent questions are displayed in Table 1. There were six mother tongue languages represented, the greatest number of which was Tamil (five). The other mother tongue languages represented were: Telegu (two), Marathi (two), Malayalam

**Table 1**

## COMPILATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

#	Mother Tongue	Other Languages (besides English)	English Education	Degree(s)	Employment Experience	How long in the U.S.
1	Telegu	Hindi, Tamil, Kannada	Private Eng-med	B.S. Phys Asst	1 yr intern	2 mos
3	Telegu	none fluently	Public Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	MBA	Admin. used Telegu	3 mos
4	Tamil	Hindi	Private Eng-med Anglo-Indian	M. Comp App	none	3 mos
6	Tamil	Hindi	Private Eng-med	MBA	HR Consult. 5 months	3 mos
7	Marathi	Hindi	Private vern-med Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	M.S. Inorg. Chem	Chemist/ Graphic Designer	1 ½ yrs
8	Marathi	Hindi	Private vern-med Eng-med (after 10 <sup>th</sup> )	B. Elec Eng	IT Field 2 years	1 yr
9	Tamil	Hindi, Telegu, Kannada	Private Eng-med	B. Engineering	Lecturer 3 years	1 ½ mos
10	Malayalam	Oriya, Telegu	Public Eng-Med then Private Eng-med	MBA-Finance	Finance Coordinator	6 mos
11	Marwari	Hindi, Kannada, Marathi	Private Eng-med	B. Commerce Masters-MIS	none	9 mos
12	Tamil	none	Public Eng-med	M. Comp App	none	9 mos
13	Tamil	Hindi	Public Eng-med	M. Comp App	Bank Officer 6 months	3 mos
15	Hindi	none	Private Eng-med	M. IT	Lecturer	1 mo

(one), Marwari (one) and Hindi (one). Mother tongue language groups are highly regional in India. The participants were from the regions where these languages are found. Tamil is spoken in Tamil-Nadu and most of the subjects in this group were from the city of Chennai (formerly known as Madras) on the southeastern coast of India. Telegu is spoken in the state of Andhrapradesh in the south-central part of India; Malathi is spoken in Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay) on the west coast; Malayalam is spoken in the state of Kerala in the southwest; Marawari and Hindi are both spoken in the northern part of India. A language map of India can be found in Appendix D .

In discussing additional languages spoken, it is understood that all participants speak English. Therefore, it is not listed as an additional language. Most of the participants (with the exception of two) spoke Hindi in addition to their mother tongue. Three respondents listed fluency in yet two more languages.

Most of the participants (nine) had started learning English at the beginning of elementary school in an English-medium school. The other three had English as a subject from the beginning of school, but didn't start English-medium instruction until 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Nine attended private schools while three attended public schools.

All of the subjects have university degrees: eight have Masters degrees, four have Bachelors degrees. The areas of study include computer science, business, and engineering. Their employment history varies from none to three years at the most. Many of the participants are new to the U.S., having been here three months or less. Only two of them have been here for more than a year.

Information on language use, English instructional methods and attitudes about the different varieties of English were not compiled in the table because the results are similar from one participant to another. When asked in what contexts they use various languages, they all reported that English was used in professional, educational and official settings. It is also used as a common language among educated people from different states. Although Hindi is one of the official languages of India, its use is differentiated between the north and south. In the north, Hindi is used as a common language for people from different states. In the south it is not used as much since the local languages are very strong. When shopping, Hindi is used with vendors who do not speak the local language, and with friends from different states who do not know English. The mother tongue is spoken at home and with family members. It is also used when speaking to servants and local shop keepers and friends within the state.

The instructional methods used in teaching English were primarily reading, writing and memorization. There was an emphasis on grammar and little on speaking. Textbooks and literature were used extensively.

Two of the questions deal with perceptions of the differences between the varieties of English relevant to this study: Indian English compared with SBE and Indian English compared with NAE. Although they sense a difference in pronunciation, most do not detect any syntactical differences. When asked about perceived differences between IE and NAE, three included grammar. The responses to this question, however, were skewed towards that answer because the title of the study on the consent form was: *Grammatical Differences between Indian English and American English.*

In general the attitudes about the use of English in India are very positive. If one can speak English well, the reasoning goes, he or she gets more respect in the community and has better employment opportunities. The older generation as a rule encourages increasing proficiency in English. However, there was one respondent who said there was a controversy about the pervasiveness of English. Some people are worried that the local languages will be diminished the more English is used.

### Speaking Task

The speaking task was an effort to record an authentic speech sample targeting expressions of the habitual and stative present tense. During the one-on-one audio-taped session, the participant was given two cue cards (see Appendix B) listing topics to speak about. One card was about habits with the following sub-categories: daily routine, hobbies, and sports. The other card was meant to elicit stative verbs and was titled “traditions”. The subcategories were beliefs, holidays, food, and dress. The participants spoke for five to ten minutes each. The content expressed for daily routine was very similar from one participant to the next because they are all living in similar situations. During transcription, only the present tense verb forms were listed. The BE copula was not included. The number of verb utterances for each session ranged from 20 to 74. Many of the verbs were repeated. The audio transcription is found in Appendix E.

The verbs uttered by each speaker were categorized into six form types. The expected forms were the simple present, the present progressive and the *used to* + infinitive construction. Three additional forms were found which were not expected.

These involved the use of the modal *will* + infinitive, *will* + progressive and *would* + infinitive. For example: *I will cook, I will clean; I will be listening to music, I will be watching TV and I would relax, I would prepare.* An quantitative analysis of the data is shown in Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2.

Of the six form categories, only the simple present form is considered standard for expressing the habitual and stative present in SBE/NAE. Three of the speakers exhibited all standard forms and two uttered only a few non-standard forms. The other speakers tended to prefer the modal *will* with the infinitive. *Will* with the progressive was also used by three of those speakers. One person used *would* + infinitive in lieu of *will* + infinitive. The construction *used to* with the infinitive was used often by three subjects and occasionally by two others. The progressive form was not as pervasive as expected. It was uttered once or twice by seven people and five times by one. Often the respondents would utter the progressive form as a noun gerund. For example, when prompted to talk about daily routine, they would sometimes list activities they would be doing: *cooking, cleaning, watching TV.* These forms were not recorded as verb forms.

The speakers' verb form preferences were categorized into three general types for easier analysis: 1) prefers simple form most of the time (six participants), 2) prefers the *will* + infinitive form (four participants) and 3) uses many forms indiscriminately (two participants).

The profiles of the participants within each of the three preference categories were compared to find similarities. This was an effort to determine possible factors (mother tongue, additional languages, English education, employment experience and length of

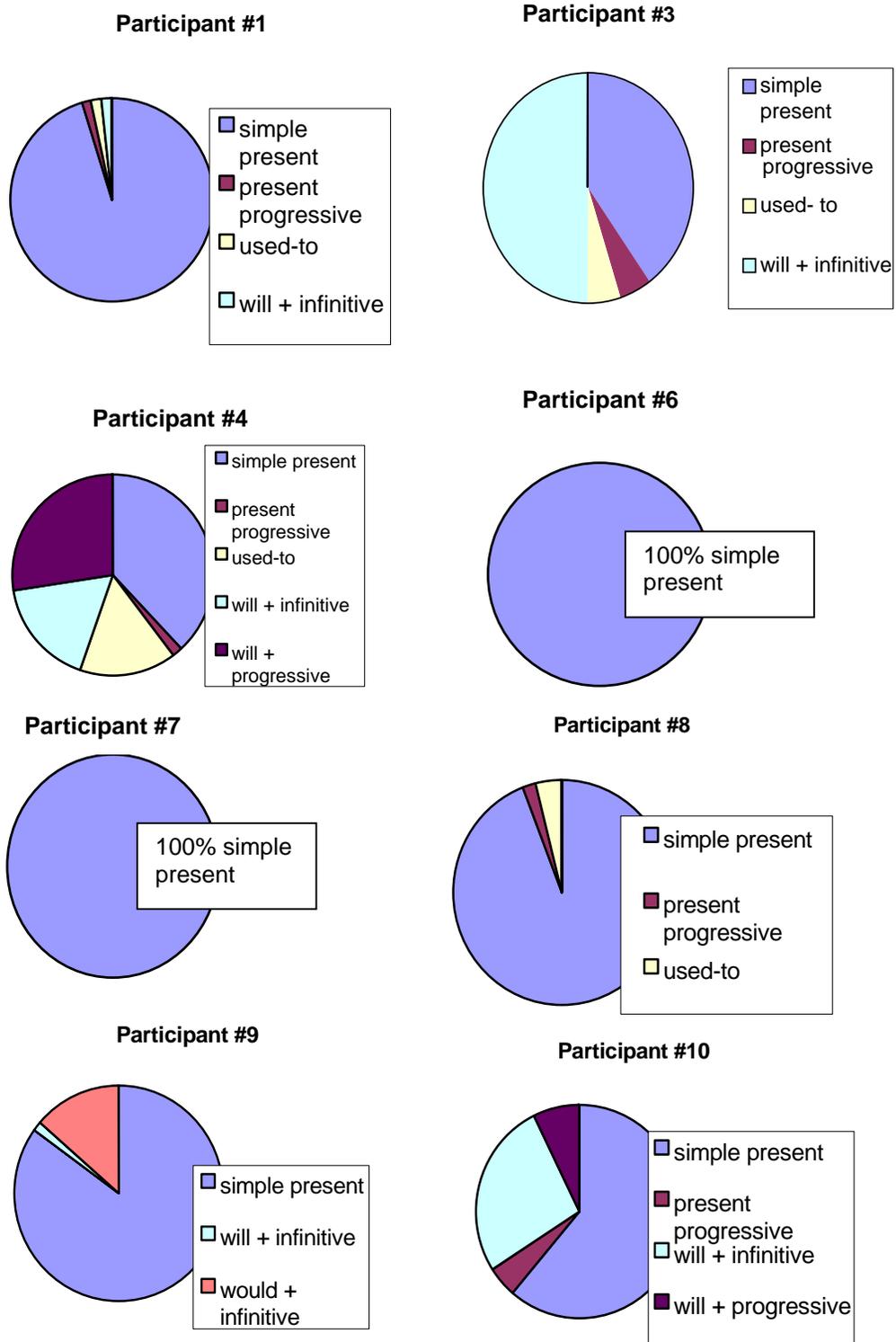
**Table 2**  
**Verb Forms Used by Participants**

Partic- pant #		# present- tense verbs	simple present	present progress.	<i>used to</i>	<i>will +</i> <i>infinitive</i>	<i>will +</i> <i>progress.</i>	<i>would +</i> <i>infinitive</i>	% simple present (out of present- tense verbs)
1	Habitual	47	44	1	1	1	0	0	94%
	Statives	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	62	59	1	1	1	0	0	95%
3	Habitual	16	4	1	1	10	0	0	25%
	Statives	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	20	8	1	1	10	0	0	40%
4	Habitual	48	16	0	9	9	14	0	33%
	Statives	10	6	1	0	1	2	0	60%
	Total	58	22	1	9	10	16	0	38%
6	Habitual	27	27	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	39	39	0	0	0	0	0	100%
7	Habitual	32	32	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	100%
8	Habitual	35	33	0	2	0	0	0	94%
	Statives	16	15	1	0	0	0	0	94%
	Total	51	48	1	2	0	0	0	94%
9	Habitual	62	51	0	0	1	0	10	82%
	Statives	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	74	63	0	0	1	0	10	85%
10	Habitual	27	15	1	0	8	3	0	56%
	Statives	14	10	1	0	3	0	0	71%
	Total	41	25	2	0	11	3	0	61%
11	Habitual	33	33	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Statives	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	100%
12	Habitual	44	13	2	0	29	0	0	30%
	Statives	13	10	3	0	0	0	0	77%
	Total	57	23	5	0	29	0	0	40%
13	Habitual	41	3	2	5	31	0	0	7%
	Statives	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	44	6	2	5	31	0	0	14%
15	Habitual	24	5	1	0	18	0	0	21%
	Statives	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	100%
	Total	33	14	1	0	18	0	0	42%

Prefers simple form: #1, # 6, #7, #8, #9, #11

Prefers *will* constructions: #3, #12, #13, #15

Shows no preference: #4, #10



**Figure 1**  
**Percentages of Verb Forms Used by Participant**

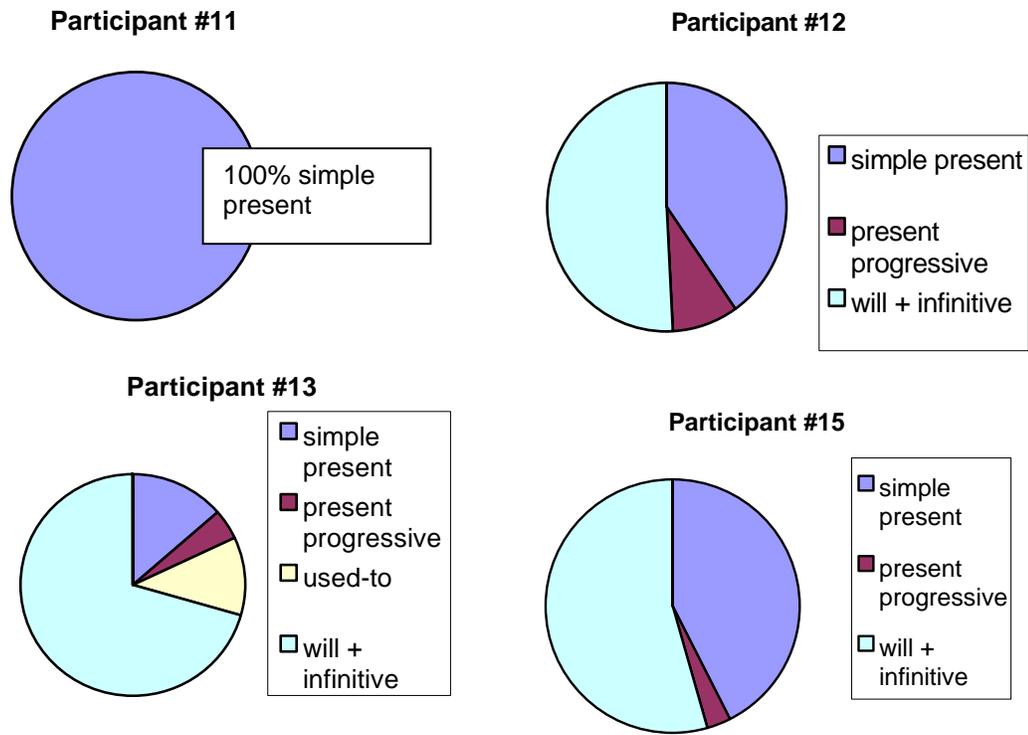


Figure 1 (continued)

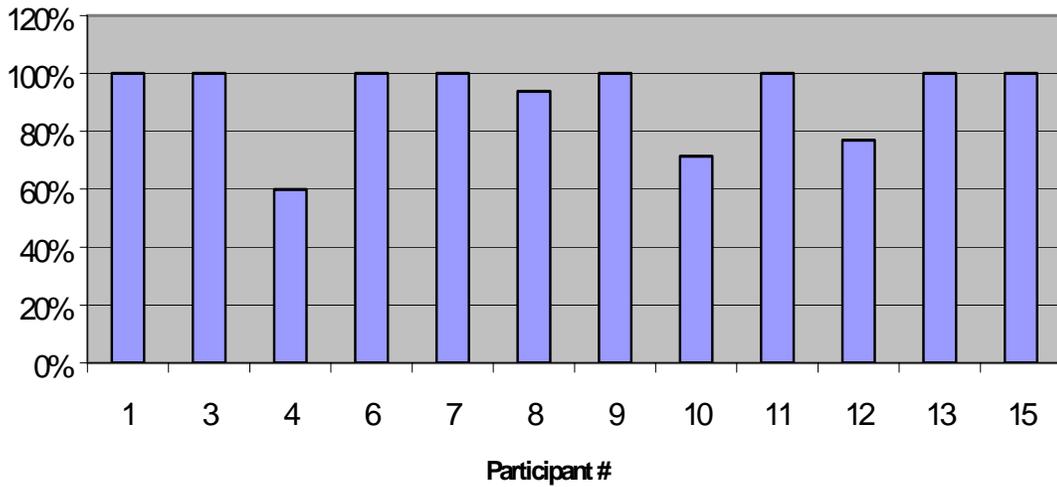


Figure 2  
Percentage Statives in Simple Form

time in the U.S) influencing the preference. It was difficult to detect any trends. Often an advantage in one area would counteract a disadvantage in another area. Yet, why do some prefer the standard form and others do not? The group that preferred the simple form was analyzed in an effort to find any differentiating features.

#### Profiles of Those Who Prefer the Simple Present Form

The profiles of the speakers who preferred the simple (standard) form were examined and no similarity was found. In fact, there are other participants who share the same profile as a standard speaker but exhibit non-standard forms. There are two speakers within this group, however, who share a profile which is different from the rest of the group. The profile differs in three areas: mother tongue, English instruction and length of time in the U.S.. They are from Mumbai (Bombay) and speak Marathi as their mother tongue. Perhaps there is some positive transfer from Marathi which favors the simple form. They attended private Marathi-medium schools until high school at which time they switched to English-medium schools. Ordinarily, one would predict that starting English-medium instruction later than the others would have resulted in more non-standard forms. Perhaps studying English initially only as a subject for years solidifies “correct” English grammar while allowing them to fully develop their L1. Another possible influence could be length of time in the U.S. They both have been in the U.S. for over a year (the longest time of any of the participants).

The other four who prefer the standard form have different mother tongues and have all attended private English-medium schools. Because these factors have commonality with the other speakers, they will be discounted as influencing the

preference. Three of the subjects had employment experience requiring the use of English in an interactive setting: a physician's assistant for one year, a human resources consultant for five months and an engineering college lecturer. English-speaking employment experience thus could be an influencing factor. The fourth subject had not been employed but has been in the U.S. longer – nine months vs. three months. Time in the U.S. might not, however, be relevant because one could assume that after years of speaking English, grammatical forms would firmly established (fossilized). The number of additional languages spoken could also increase the likelihood of more standard forms. Three of these speakers speak three other languages in addition to their mother tongue and English. Perhaps more language learning in general increases proficiency.

Many influencing factors have been addressed above, but there are two factors which can only be surmised as they are difficult to measure. They are language aptitude and motivation. It is possible that these “standard” speakers have a good aptitude for language learning and/or have been highly motivated to achieve standard academic English.

#### Profiles of Those Who Prefer *Will* + Infinitive

Among the four participants who preferred the *will* + infinitive form, two were generally less confident about their oral proficiency in English. They have language profiles that would support this – no languages other than the mother tongue and English. All of the other participants at least speak Hindi. They both attended public schools. One school was English-medium, the other English-medium after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Neither has employment experience using English.

It is more difficult to identify influences with the other two speakers. For one, the only factor in the profile would be that she attended a public English-medium school and perhaps that particular public school was inferior to a private school. The other participant attended a private English-medium school. She speaks Hindi as a mother tongue and has no other language besides English. Hindi is an official language and, as it is the mother tongue as well, would perhaps be used extensively in lieu of English.

#### Profiles of Those Who Show No Preference

The two speakers in this category are an enigma. Their profiles are similar to many of the other speakers. However, one speaker was the only one who attended an Anglo-Indian school. Ordinarily, this educational experience would point to more standard forms being expressed, yet this is not the case. With little in their profiles to distinguish these speakers, what could explain their seemingly indiscriminate use of forms to express the habitual and stative present? Perhaps it is a function of personality and personal preference. These two speakers might enjoy varying the forms for their own sake or that of the listener. This phenomenon points to a potential difference in the concept of aspect. Perhaps their aspect rules are more flexible than those of a native English speaker.

#### Distinctions Between Habitual and Stative Expressions

The verbs uttered were categorized as either stative or non-stative verbs (listed as habitual in Table 2). The stative verbs identified were of the following categories: mental perception – *believe, know, mean, think*; emotions/attitudes/opinions – *accept, enjoy, feel, like, love, need, prefer, want*; possession – *have*. When *have* was used to

express eating or drinking, it was not counted as a stative expression. The sensory verbs *see* and *hear* were discounted because they were often used to mean *watch* and *listen* which are not stative verbs. The data in Table 2 and Figure 2 show that even among non-standard speakers, there is a tendency to use the simple form with statives. This implies that the aspectual rules for statives are more firmly planted. Of the nine people who exhibited mixed forms, five used the simple form exclusively when expressing statives. Of the four remaining speakers, two used a non-standard form for statives only a few times. The remaining two showed no form preference. Examples of non-standard stative expressions are: *We are knowing*, *They are having Saturday and Sunday off*, *They are accepting*, and *We will be having more belief*.

#### Analysis of Verbs Used

Within each form category, the verbs used were examined to find patterns. Were some verbs more prevalent in one form than in another?

The simple present form. The preference for the simple form for statives has already be discussed. The data of the mixed-form speakers was then examined to see which non-stative verbs tend to be expressed in the simple form in lieu of other forms. The most common verbs were those that express short duration: *get up*, *leave*, *come*, *go*, *put*, and *take*.

The present progressive form. The present progressive form was used infrequently. The verbs represented were stative and non-stative: *coming*, *celebrating*, *having* (Saturdays and Sundays off), *having* (a good mood), *wearing*, *accepting*, *helping*, *knowing*. It is interesting to note that the speakers use other forms of the same verbs.

The verb itself does not seem to dictate which form is used. In fact, there seems to be little pattern to the forms used by any one speaker. With regards to the non-stative verbs (*coming, celebrating, wearing, and helping*), it is unclear whether the progressive aspect was being stressed or whether the form was being used indiscriminately. In each case, the speaker was talking about things that happen on a regular basis as a matter of habit or tradition.

Used to plus infinitive. Five speakers exhibited the use of this form. Great care was given to ensure that these utterances were indeed the present tense and not the past tense. The verb most often represented in this category was *used to go* (by all speakers). Three speakers had only one *used to* utterance which was indeed *used to go*. The following is a list of verbs used by the other two speakers: *paint, make, wear, prepare, watch, laugh, talk, check, do, and see*. The *used to* construction is used to express something that one is accustomed to doing. The following verbs are not usually expressed with *used to*: verbs expressing habits that are common to most people such as: *eat, drink, sleep, take a bath* and verbs of short duration such as *start, get up, and leave*.

Will or would with infinitive. Six speakers used the *will* + infinitive construction while one used *would* + infinitive in lieu of *will*. *Would* has a more nuanced effect than *will* and the person who preferred *would* was indeed a more standard speaker. In the *will* + infinitive category there were a variety of non-stative verbs used. They were used with pervasiveness especially among those who prefer this form. There is no pattern to the non-stative verbs chosen. The few stative verbs expressed with this form are: *will think, will believe* and *will have*. Again, the subjects were talking about habits and traditions –

things that happen on a regular basis. Perhaps they view these things as sure to happen in the future and thus are using the modal *will*. Anecdotally, this construction is sometimes used by native speakers of English when talking about daily routine. If the utterance time is early in the day and they are talking about something that habitually occurs later in the day, the *will* + infinitive form might be used. Yet, one should consider that perhaps this form is being used because a modal is an easier form to master. This would be in keeping with the theory of over-generalization – that there is a preference for the less marked form. This is not as likely given the advanced English education level of these participants.

*Will with progressive.* An example of this form is: *I'll be watching TV*. This form was only used by two people who also used *will* + infinitive. Within these *will* constructions, the infinitive form can be compared with the progressive form. The non-stative verbs used in the progressive form were: *doing, penning down, sitting, relaxing, cleaning, washing, asking, telling, watching, working, talking, chatting, maintaining*. The stative verbs used in the progressive form were: *having* and *feeling*. Most of these verbs were also used in other forms by the same people. It is unclear again, whether the progressive aspect was intended or the choice of forms indiscriminate.

#### Debriefing Session and Group Discussion

At the beginning of the last session, a handout (see Appendix C) was given to the group which described the purpose of the research and the four non-standard forms for expressing habits and states that were identified. The various forms were discussed

individually. The group was asked to consider the following influences: mother tongue, Hindi, methods of English instruction and contexts where English is used. At the end of the session there was discussion on the preferred habitual forms for each mother tongue.

### Present Progressive

There was consensus that those less proficient in English use this form more often. When asked if they thought it was an easier form, they agreed. Although it is unclear whether or not they would have identified this feature on their own.

### Used to

There was much discussion on this form. All were aware that it is a form used by many Indian English speakers. Only some of them were aware of the confusion with the past tense when communicating with an American native English speaker. There was a lot of discussion between the participants to clarify the sense of *used to*. One person said that it was a Telegu influence. If this is so, then the influence must have spread because the two participants who used this form the most are from the Tamil-Nadu region which is nearby.

### Will Constructions

Immediately upon identifying this form a participant said, 'That's Tamil. We do that in Tamil. That is directly from Tamil.' The other Tamil speakers agreed this to be the case. Yet not all and not only Tamil speakers used this construction. Those with the mother tongue of Telegu, Malayalam and Hindi also used it. Telegu and Malayalam are both Dravidian languages as is Tamil. Perhaps there is a similarity. Those language regions are neighboring so there could be a regional influence as well. Hindi, however, is

an Indo-European language, and it is unclear as to how the *will* construction would be acquired by this speaker. It is interesting to note that the two Marathi speakers did not use this construction.

### English Instruction

There were not many comments on this topic. According to the participants, private schools are superior to public schools. It is common to have native English speakers (Anglo-Indian) as English teachers in private schools. Most seemed to think that it is most beneficial to start English-medium instruction as soon as possible. An English-medium school can sometimes be bilingual since the state language is used to clarify. One participant, however, said that in her school they were fined if they spoke a language other than English and she exhibited primarily standard forms in the speaking task.

### Hindi/English Influence

The group acknowledged that they sometimes alter the word order of Hindi to a word order similar to English, although they did not attribute this to the pervasiveness of English in India. They said they did it for fun or for nuance. When told that perhaps English is influencing Hindi in this way, they were intrigued and agreed that it was possible. In India today there is a tendency towards speaking 'Hinglish' (a combination of Hindi and English) when shopping and talking with friends. English has had such an impact on society that it is considered 'fashionable' to speak English. Some families speak only English at home in an effort to maximize proficiency. As proficiency in the vernacular language declines, it becomes necessary to use Hinglish as a common

language. In fact, other mother tongues are mixed with English as well. Language purity is difficult to find in India.

#### Mother Tongue Preferred Forms

Each language group was given a short translation exercise in order to determine the preferred form for expressing the habitual (statives were neglected at this point). The following sentences were given: *He cooks every day*; *He is cooking now*; and *He is in the habit of cooking every day*. Six languages were represented, yet information was obtained by only five. (The Marwari speaker said her language is very close to Hindi and chose to work with the Hindi native speaker on the translation exercise.) In Hindi, Marathi and Malayalam, the preferred form is the simple form while in Tamil the *will* form is preferred. Telegu speakers prefer equally the simple form and the ‘in the habit of’ form, yet accept all forms. Many of the participants admitted that they did not know there was a rule in English about using the simple present to express the habitual.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find possible factors influencing the non-standard expressions of the habitual and stative present of Indian English speakers. Initially, the focus was on two non-standard forms: present progressive and *used to* + infinitive. The progressive was expressed only occasionally during the speaking task, *used to*, a little more. An unexpected, yet more prevalent form was the modal *will* + infinitive construction. There were a few examples of the progressive version of this form as well as the modal *would* + infinitive. In all, many different combinations of

forms were used by the twelve participants to express habits and states in the present tense. Comments made during the debriefing discussion suggest that the participants were unaware of rules for a standard form to use when expressing habits and states. In addition, the results of the questionnaire show that many perceive no syntactical differences between Indian English and SBE.

The variation of forms expressed by this group is interesting to note in terms of aspect. The participants' aspectual rules seem more closely aligned with standard academic English when expressing states rather than habits. The simple form was the predominant form used for states. There is greater aspectual subjectivity involved in expressing habits. The duration of the action as well as the perceived level of commonality seems to influence the form used. When talking about habits one could think in aspectual terms of the future since the habit will indeed occur in the future with regularity. This could explain the use of the modal *will* as in, *I will cook dinner*. It is unclear whether to attribute the differences in forms to aspect or to other factors such as mother tongue influence or general issues of proficiency.

In analyzing the results of the study, it can be argued that several potential factors may be influencing the forms used. These influences may be both positive and negative, and may include mother tongue, number of additional languages, English education and employment experience. Regarding mother tongue, there is perhaps some negative transfer from Tamil resulting in the *will* form. There could be some sort of positive transfer from Marathi which favors the simple form.

Another positive influence might be number of additional languages spoken. Among the participants of this group, those who spoke more languages had more standard forms. Conversely, the ones who only spoke English in addition to their mother tongue exhibited less standard forms. Perhaps this increased language experience improves overall proficiency.

The number of years and quality of English-medium instruction could also have an effect on the acquisition of more standard English syntax. Private English-medium schools seem to be more beneficial than public vernacular-medium schools. An exception was found, however, with the two women from Mumbai who exhibited standard forms. They attended a private Malathi-medium school with English as a subject switching to English-medium after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Quality vs. quantity of instruction may be factor here.

Employment experience in contexts where English is used in an interactive setting may have a positive influence on developing more standard forms. Those participants who worked after earning their degrees tended to show more standard forms. English is used widely in India in areas of academia, government and commerce while other languages are often used in everyday life. Unless one has a job using English, there could be little opportunity for oral practice.

The results of the human subject research were enlightening. The study began with assumptions that certain non-standard forms existed. During the speaking task unexpected forms were found which proved to enrich the research. Factors which potentially could be influencing these forms were analyzed by comparing the speech

sample data with the questionnaire profile of each speaker. The anecdotal information gained through the group discussion helped to complete the analysis.

The Conclusion Chapter, which follows, places the results of the research in context of information gained in the Literature Review. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed and areas of further study are identified.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Central to the question of this study is the nature of Indian English itself, its features and influences. Indian English is a second language variety of English which is acquired in a pluralinguistic setting. Multiple language interference combined with a lack of opportunity for oral practice help to create a varietal spectrum of Indian English. In these circumstances, how could Indian English possibly not differ from British English? The differences are most likely due to efforts to simplify language acquisition. First language transfer and over-generalization can influence acquisition. These strategies can produce interlanguages which fossilize along the spectrum of Indian English.

Why do some speakers attain a variety higher on the spectrum while others fall lower? Educational and employment opportunities differ greatly in India, due in part to the legacy of the caste system. Those with access to superior educational opportunities (private English-medium schools which feed into English-medium universities) are more likely to enter professions which require the use of English on a regular basis. Those with little opportunity for education can only hope to have these professions. Their employment is of a lower level using the local language. For their English communication needs, a simplified variety of the language may be sufficient.

This broad examination of Indian English has led to the narrower study of a distinct grammar point: the non-standard expressions of the simple present tense. At the outset, these expressions included the progressive form as well as the *used to* construction. When comparing the progressive form with the simple form, one must

acknowledge morpheme acquisition order – the progressive is one of the earliest verb morphemes learned in SBE/NAE. According to Comrie (1976), the progressive is acquired before the simple form in all languages; it is a language universal. Using the present progressive to express habits and states could be a form of grammar over-generalization. This could provide further support for Comrie and others' hypothesis that the less marked form is generalized. It is unclear whether the Hindi use of the auxiliary for the simple present is transferred to English, but it may have a role in solidifying the generalized progressive form. One could assume that a speaker using the progressive in place of the simple form pervasively has had less English experience (education and oral practice in general). This assumption is supported by the results of the study: The research group consisted solely of highly educated women and there were few expressions of the progressive form when discussing habits and traditions.

The *used to* construction was slightly more prevalent than the progressive but appears to be more of a first language transfer than a generalization strategy. This would be true, also, for the *will* + infinitive construction which appeared unexpectedly. Yet, perhaps these first language transfers include aspect transfer as well as syntactical transfer. During the debriefing session of the research, some of the participants said that they didn't know there was any one correct verb form to use when talking about habits and states. This was reflected in some of the speech samples in which speakers used several forms indiscriminately. It is possible that the mother tongue has little or no morphological verb changes to express aspect. Although the concepts of aspect are universal, they are not always reflected in the grammar of a given language. There

appears to be more universality when it comes to stative verbs as the respondents were more likely to use the standard form with statives.

### Implications

There are pedagogical implications of this study. An Indian English speaker enrolled in an advanced level ESL class in the U.S. would exhibit many grammatical forms that would appear to be ‘ungrammatical’. It is important for the teacher to know why this is happening. The American ESL profession must be aware of nativized varieties of English and respect them as having linguistic integrity. In addition to Indian English, our ESL population speaks other nativized Englishes such as Liberian English and Nigerian English. Although the ‘mistakes’ are features of distinct varieties of English, they must be dealt with if a student wants to attain standard academic English. How can this best be approached pedagogically?

In order to help Indian students progress towards more standardized forms of NAE or SBE, it is important that they first be made aware of the differences between the varieties. Then, explicit instruction on English aspect is necessary. It cannot be assumed that the morphological changes of the English aspect system are similar to those of the learners’ first language. Students must understand that there is usually a preferred verb form to be used in NAE. However, some level of error should be accepted. Once the issue of aspect is addressed, the students need plenty of opportunity for communicative practice – something they perhaps lacked in their English classes or workplaces back home.

### Limitations

The limitations of the study are two-fold and involve the research group composition and the speaking task design. First, the homogeneity of the group, although in some ways ideal, limited the data collection. A group representing a range in proficiency levels would produce more varied data. Yet, it might be difficult to get lower level speakers – they are not usually the ones who come to the U.S. to work or with husbands who are working. The group was not only homogeneous but relatively small so the results cannot be generalized to a larger population.

The speaking task had limitations as well. In an effort to avoid modeling verb forms, the task was lightly structured with little control from the examiner. Thus, the amount of speech obtained from each participant varied depending on personality. Also, because the respondent was asked to talk about habits, hobbies and traditions, there was a tendency to list activities as nouns rather than use complete sentences. Some of the progressive utterances were indeed gerunds and could not be counted as true progressive forms. It was difficult to elicit a lot of stative verbs. The task should be redesigned to add more structure and control and better elicit stative verb forms.

### Further Study

The results of the research point to many factors potentially influencing the prevalence of non-standard syntactical features of Indian English. Further study might involve a wider variety of syntactical features with the same research group. Would the

same results be found? Is there a general proficiency element involved which can be generalized to other non-standard features? More study is needed on stative verb forms in order to draw conclusions as to the universality of states. It would be interesting to study more Malathi speakers from Mumbai (Bombay) to see if they indeed are more proficient than Tamil and Telegu speakers. If so, could vernacular-medium private schools provide some sort of advantage to learning English? This is a wider question involving issues of bilingual education.

The nature of Indian English as a nativized variety itself warrants further study. Although only 5% of India's population speaks English, the total is so great that it is the third largest English-speaking country in the world following the U.S. and the U.K. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1995). The Internet and global trade have made English the *lingua franca* of the world. India's large, highly-educated English speaking population is making its mark in the world with its own distinct variety of English: Indian English.

APPENDIX A

Participant Questionnaire

Factors Influencing the Grammatical Features of Indian English  
Questionnaire

Participant Number

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14. Where are you from in India?
15. What is your educational background?
16. What is your employment background?
17. How long have you been in the U.S.?
18. Have you ever lived in the U.S. before or in Britain?
19. What is your mother tongue?
20. What other languages do you speak fluently?
21. In India, in what situations do you use,  
  
English?  
  
Hindi?  
  
Your mother tongue?  
  
Other languages?

22. Describe your English language education experience.

When did you start learning English?

Did you go to a public or private school?

What were the predominant methods of instruction?

When did English-medium instruction begin and in what subjects?

23. In your opinion, is the English spoken in India different from the English spoken in Britain? If yes, describe some of the differences.

24. Is the English spoken in India different from the English spoken in the U.S.? If yes, describe some of the differences.

25. What are your family and friends' attitudes about the pervasiveness of English in India?

26. What are your biggest challenges in using English in the U.S.?

APPENDIX B

Speaking Task Cue Cards

## **“CUE CARDS” for Speaking Task**

### **TRADITIONS**

- Beliefs
- Holidays
- Food
- Dress

### **HABITS**

- Daily Routine
- Hobbies
- Sports

APPENDIX C

Simple Present Information Sheet

## STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH Expressing States And The Habitual Present

When we talk about habitual actions and states of mind, we use the simple present form of the verb.

Habits: Every day I cook, I clean the house and I take a bath.

States: I have a brother, I know that man, I believe in God, I love to read.

My research was specifically studying the occurrence of different grammatical forms to express the habitual present and states of mind in Indian English. I refer to these as “non-standard forms” because they are not the same as what would be said in Standard American or British English. (SAE or BE)

The non-standard forms are:

5. **present progressive** – progressive means that the action is in progress. Since a habit is not in progress at the time of utterance, we don’t usually use the progressive form. In English, states have no beginning or end so cannot be in progress.

ex. Every day I am cooking, I am cleaning and I am taking a bath.  
I am having a work permit now, I am knowing something about that.

6. **”used to”** – this construction is not used at all in SAE to express habitual present. In fact, Americans will think you are speaking about something that happened previously on a regular basis but is no longer happening.

ex. Every day I used to cook, I used to clean...etc.

7. **The modal “will” + verb infinitive** – This usually refers to the future in SAE. We view habitual present as having no beginning and no end, therefore no future expression.

ex. Every day I will cook, I will clean, I will surf the net....

8. **The modal “will + BE + progressive verb form** – Usually means future action of continuous duration.

ex. Every day I will be cooking, I will be cleaning, I will be reading....

I’m wondering if these characteristics of Indian English have developed because of:

- Mother tongue influence?
- Hindi influence?
- Methods of English instruction?
- Contexts where English is used?

What are your opinions about each form?

**Do you think you view states and habitual present differently?**

APPENDIX D

Language Map of India



APPENDIX E

Speaking Task Transcription

### Speaking Task Transcription

(Stative verbs are underlined)

#1

#### **Habits**

get up, cook, push off, does not eat, he leaves, go sit down, have a cup a coffee, I don't get to eat, eat, I might see some movies, switch, comes on line, talk, varies, come on line, pay, browse, check my mails, feel hungry, take breakfast, I'll have to get ready and come here. I don't feel like doing anything, sit on the couch, watch the TV, doze off, don't cook, go scrub, laundry, I watch, I go to the gym, I used to go the gym, work a lot, spend, come back, call up, have dinner, don't do anything, I don't have a permit to work, I don't have a SSN, I have a lot of hobbies, sing, love, like to read, belongs, play, play, play, skip, like jumping, like to solve puzzle, like to sleep, love to sleep. I am not watching a lot of cricket, play cards, gamble, likes, sits and watches movies, we go around, don't even drive distances, we tend to go out a lot, go to the mall,

#### **Traditions**

Believe, believe, believe, etc. touch

#3

#### **Habits**

will chat, will take, will watch, will read, will help, have hobbies, will meet and talk, will watch and talk, will get together

#### **Traditions**

believe, believe, used to go, go, enjoy, take, use, wear, are wearing

#4

#### **Habits**

get up, leaves, used to prepare, I'll prepare, I'll be sitting I'll be relaxing, I'll start, I'll be cleaning, I'll be washing, I'll do, I'll take a bath and start preparing dinner, I'll be asking, has a good mood, I'll be telling, used to watch TV, likes, used to watch, used to laugh will be watching, I used to go and talk. I don't sleep. I go and talk with my friend, I will

be telling, we'll have our dinner, may talk, lives, make, I'll go and check, He takes, If he's having a good mood, he'll be working, they will be feeling, he feels, goes, comes back, feels, goes, comes, feels, will be having some time, we'll be talking and chatting, we used to check mails, I will show,

### **Traditions**

will think, will be doing, we used to do, will be maintaining, used to see, wear, serve, will be having more belief, they have a color, wear, used to wear, wear

#6

### **Habits**

includes, love, don't like, love, cook, spend time, do, read, love, love, know, don't know, love, have an interest towards music, sing, get up, cook, prepare, have breakfast, go out, spend time, have a lot of work

### **Traditions**

believe, do, pray, prepare, offer, do, have (a ritual), perform, offer, make, put, offer, take, have (the meal), eat, offer, perform

#7

### **Habits**

get up, make, make, come, go, talk, go out, comes, go, like, like, take, go, play, play, like,

### **Traditions**

starts, make, make, make, make, come together, believe, go, make, make, don't eat, eat, get, eat, make, use, use, use, wear, say,

#8

### **Habits**

goes, don't have a work authorization, give, comes, comes, cook, have lunch together, chat, chat, comes, go, love, go out, used to go out, like, used to go and we have a walk (go for a walk), teaches, knows, like, like, give, wants, want, like, read

**Traditions**

believe, have got, celebrate, take, goes, takes, worship, go, depends, like, distribute sweets, light, put, light, get, have traditions, get, have different sweets, have these sweets, make, follow, (Do you know everybody's caste?) yes we are knowing. speaks, takes, have many castes,

#9

**Habits**

*In India:* get up, finish, start, leave home, starts, work, have teaching hours, come, have lunch, have practical sessions, go, refresh, go, would relax, would start, start, teach, need, will see (make sure), go. *In the U.S.:* leaves, get up, make, goes, sit, browse, take, go out, work, would take, refresh, would start, would finish, would have lunch, would come, go, would see some people, would talk, while away my time, start, start, drive, go, listen, watch, would like to attend parties.

**Traditions**

differs, have different cultural traditions, change, originate, know, want, need, know, differ, use, make, put on weight, feel, concentrate, depends, happens, doesn't mean, don't take, say, believe, say, don't accept, believe, worship, worship.

#10

**Habits**

get up, leaves, surf, I'll do exercise, I'll be doing something like reading, I'll cook, I'll read, comes, we'll go out, I'll be penning down, works, work, doesn't have the laptop, I'll be penning down, I'll write, love, have inside plants, do crochet, go

**Traditions**

find, won't talk, think, they will believe, feel, believe, see, believe, give off, want, Software Companies they are having Saturdays and Sundays off, put, get, depends, love, love, have different dress, is wearing a sari, will have one white sari, will have different saris, will make, will wear

#11

**Habits**

get up, prepare, watch, exercise, surf , prepare, have homework helper, take, comes, go, come back, have dinner, watch TV, have at the U of M, practice, remove, play, play,

**Traditions**

comes, have these things, pray, pray, have to sacrifice, fast, fast, go, have these eight days, don't take, don't eat, find, do not kill, take, avoid, don't take, get married

#12

**Habits**

get up, I'll cook, I'll pack, I'll do exercise, I'll browse, I'll chat, has a kid, I speak, I'll take lunch, I will watch, I'll sleep, I'll go, I'll go, I have a lot of friends, we'll go out, I'll come back, I'll make, I'll prepare, we watch, we chat, he'll tell, we'll ring and speak, I'll hear music, like, I'll hear, I'll watch, have connection, I'll watch, I'll read, like, want, feel,

**Traditions**

have our own culture, go, has own idea, have a lot of gods, have a lot of religions, worship, eat, celebrate, get together, wear, we'll do crackers, we'll make, we'll chat, we enjoy, we'll go, we'll start, they're accepting, they are wearing jeans, they're not accepting it, they are wearing tightly, they're not accepting, they prefer, we'll pray, will start

#13

**Habits**

I'll listen, I'll listen, have hobbies, used to paint, used to make, I'll get up, I'll cook, I'll clean, I'll do cleaning, I'll make, I'll go, I'll take a bath, I'll hear some music, I'll have my lunch, I'll go, I'll spend some time and then come home, I'll come, I'll read, comes, I'll prepare, we'll have dinner, we'll talk, we'll go to bed, see cricket, watch, don't play

**Traditions**

have religious beliefs, is coming, will not mingle, will mingle, will see, will not see, We are celebrating. We used to go, they'll keep, they'll invite, they'll keep, they'll invite, they'll make, they'll give, they'll prepare. We used to wear Sari, they used to wear Pajamas.

#15

**Habits**

I'll go, I'll take, I have this yoga, pray, take, we will go to gym, we will come back, I'll prepare my lunch and take lunch, I go to sleep, he want, he don't want, he wants, I'll go, he'll come, I'll spend, we'll go to sleep, we will take, we will see, we will talk, we will go to sleep.

**Traditions**

have to wear sari, put, I'll go out, are helping me, he'll go and see the girl, means, it will predict, means, have in-laws, don't like, want, take

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## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SYNTACTICAL TENSE/ASPECT FEATURES OF INDIAN WORLD ENGLISH: THE SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

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ESL students from India speak a nativized variety of English which involves syntactical features different from those of Standard British or North American English (SBE/NAE). Some of these syntactical differences are tense/aspect related. The purpose of this research was to study the non-standard oral expressions of the simple present tense by native speakers of Indian English in order to determine prevalence and potential influences.

Previous research has shown that Indian English, a second language variety of English, has been influenced by first language transfer and grammar over-generalization as it is acquired in a multilingual society with limited communicative practice.

Twelve highly educated women from India with various mother tongues participated in the present study which consisted of a questionnaire to determine background information, a speaking task focusing on present habits and states, and a group debriefing session. Verb forms uttered in the speaking task were categorized in two ways: stative vs. non-stative, and standard vs. non-standard. Information obtained through the questionnaire and the group debriefing session was used to help determine potential influencing factors.

The results of the research show there are various verb forms used to express the simple present tense in Indian English and that verb form preference differs by individual. Analysis of the data suggests that educational and employment experience, as well as the number of languages acquired, may be influential factors. Anecdotal information from the debriefing session indicates that there may be first language transfer in terms of verb form preference. Indian English speakers may lack an awareness of the morphological restrictions of the perfective aspect in SBE/NAE which could explain their use of various verb forms. This study suggests that explicit instruction on aspect would be beneficial to Indian English speakers.