

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ON INDIAN ACADEMIC WRITING: A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

In India, abstract English holds a special and complicated place as the main language of higher education, a lingua franca, and a second language. English is the primary language used in academic settings for research publications, conference presentations, and information sharing. However, learning academic writing rules might be difficult for Indian scholars, especially those for whom English is not their first language. With an emphasis on grammar, syntax, stylistic conventions, and code-switching, this paper examines the linguistic and stylistic difficulties encountered by Indian academics while utilizing English as a second language (ESL). The paper examines common problems such tense shifts, improper use of articles and prepositions, repetition, literal translations from regional languages, and the predominance of "Indianisms," drawing on ideas of World Englishes and earlier research on ESL writing. These difficulties are not just grammatical; they are also influenced by institutional practices, sociolinguistic variables, and cultural viewpoints on the representation of information. The study also looks at the connections between these language barriers and more general academic issues including plagiarism, citation styles, and publication hurdles in foreign journals. This study makes the case for the creation of writing centers, academic writing support systems, and focused ESL instruction for researchers and students in Indian universities by using an analytical and descriptive methodology. The results show that although Indian academic English has unique characteristics, it needs to be more closely aligned with international standards in order to be recognized by scholars worldwide. The study concludes by highlighting how important it is for India to improve its ESL academic writing abilities in order to integrate into the international academic community.

Keywords: *English as a Second Language (ESL), Indian English, Academic Writing, Linguistic Challenges, Code-Switching, Stylistics, etc.*

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Introduction:

English's existence in India is the result of a convoluted historical trajectory that started with colonial power and continues to this day as a universal language. English is currently the main language of instruction in higher education and is recognized as an associate official language of India. The majority of scientific and literary publications, conferences, and research journals are in this language. However, for Indian students and scholars, for whom English is not their first language but rather a second or even third language after their mother tongue and regional state language, this dominance poses special difficulties.

Proficiency in specific stylistic rules, such as accuracy, coherence, logical organization, and formal vocabulary, is necessary for academic writing in English. The language backgrounds of Indian ESL learners frequently clash with these expectations. The challenges are made worse by the institutional disregard for formal writing instruction, the influence of regional languages, and a lack of exposure to academic discourse communities. Because of this, a lot of Indian academics have trouble having their work published in foreign publications or have their study misunderstood because of linguistic errors. The purpose of this essay is to examine the particular

language and stylistic problems that define academic writing in English from India. It will place these in the larger perspective of World Englishes, English as a Second Language, and India's sociolinguistic realities. In addition to identifying obstacles, the objective is to suggest solutions for improving academic writing proficiency among Indian researchers.

Literature Review:

English's dual character as a colonial legacy and a contemporary necessity is often highlighted in research on the language in India. According to Braj B. Kachru's theory of world Englishes, Indian English is a valid dialect of the language that is influenced by regional linguistic and cultural norms. Indian English is a nativized variety of the language with unique phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics, not just a learner's English. Even though spoken Indian English is now recognized, academic writing is still evaluated according to international norms that are dominated by Western practices. Research on ESL academic writing shows that learners frequently struggle with issues such as a small vocabulary, a lack of cohesiveness, incorrect article and preposition usage, and trouble keeping a formal register (Hyland 45). The practice of "translation thinking," in which authors try to construct English sentences according to the syntactic patterns of their native tongue, exacerbates these issues in India. The Hindi expression "*kal mai bazaar gaya tha*" can be translated directly into English as "*Yesterday I market went was*," however it needs to be reworded for grammar. Even though they are gradually improved, many pupils' writings still follow these patterns.

A different line of inquiry focuses on social elements. According to Canagarajah, ESL writing should be viewed as an alternative discourse influenced by cultural circumstances rather than just being assessed for "errors" (112). For example, in keeping with their native rhetorical traditions, Indian students may place

more value on rich or ornamental articulation than on succinct and straightforward argumentation. This cultural difference frequently conflicts with international academic standards that place a premium on conciseness and clarity. According to current research, Indian academic writing in English thus inhabits a contentious space: it is both limited by international publication norms and represents the legitimacy of Indian English as a variety. Building on these observations, this essay examines the unique linguistic difficulties faced by Indian authors and suggests solutions.

Methodology:

The methodology used in this paper is both descriptive and analytical. The information is taken from secondary sources, such as published publications on Indian English, examinations of ESL writing, and earlier linguistic studies. In order to give a thorough picture of the difficulties in Indian academic writing, the paper synthesizes previous data with linguistic frameworks rather than depending on actual research.

The study's scope comprises:

1. Linguistic examination of errors frequently found in Indian ESL situations.
2. Analysis of how Indian English writing differs from international academic norms in terms of style and rhetoric.
3. Examination of the institutional and sociolinguistic elements influencing writing habits.

Although the study's dependence on secondary sources limits it, it attempts to present a comprehensive analysis of the problem by fusing theoretical viewpoints with real-world experiences.

Analysis and Discussions:

A) Grammatical Challenges: - Indian academic writing frequently exhibits grammatical problems that are typical of second-language learning. Typical issues include:

- **Tense Changes:** To show a lack of chronological consistency, writers may switch between the past and present tenses in a single paragraph.
- **Article Usage:** Students sometimes abuse or omit definite and indefinite articles ("The India is a developing country") because many Indian languages lack them.
- **Prepositions:** When used incorrectly, prepositions can result in phrases like "discuss about," "concerned on," or "return back."
- **Subject-Verb Agreement:** Regional syntax, such as "The group of students are," might make it difficult to distinguish between singular and plural forms.

Although they don't always impair communication, these grammar errors have an impact on academic writing's perceived quality and frequently lead to rejection from international journals.

B) Stylistic Variations:

Despite the need for accuracy in academic writing, Indian ESL writers usually use verbose or redundant sentences. For instance, "This happens because" could be used instead of "The reason why this is happening is because." A cultural emphasis on formality and refinement is reflected in this redundancy. Another factor contributing to stylistic variance is literal translations from mother tongues. Idiomatic phrases like "working day and night" (*raat din kaam karna*) in Marathi or Hindi, for example, may seem informal in professional writing even though they make sense.

C) Code-Switching and Indianisms:

Indian academic literature occasionally uses regional idioms or "Indianisms," including "do the needful," "delay," or "out of station." These terms could be confusing to readers from other countries, even if they are appropriate in Indian professional settings. Despite being prevalent in spoken

contexts, code-switching between English and regional languages often affects academic writing, resulting in hybrid idioms.

D) Plagiarism and Citation Issues:

Plagiarism, which is frequently inadvertent, is a major problem associated with ESL writing. Because they understand memorization as a sign of respect rather than intellectual dishonesty, students who are used to rote learning may copy entire textbook passages without giving credit. The issue is made worse by unfamiliarity with reference formats like MLA or APA.

E) Global Publication Barriers:

Despite having excellent research material, Indian scientists frequently get their work rejected by international journals because of these linguistic and stylistic issues. "Poor language quality" is a common reason given by reviewers for rejection. This perpetuates academic inequity by limiting the exposure of Indian scholarship on the international scene.

Findings: According to the analysis,

1. Indian ESL authors frequently face grammatical and stylistic issues that stem from the structures of their native tongue.
2. Indian academic writing is a reflection of cultural rhetorical traditions that value adornment and richness over concision.
3. While localized idioms and "Indianisms" set Indian English apart, they also make it more difficult to understand internationally.
4. The institutional disregard for writing instruction is a major factor in these issues' continued existence.
5. Academic writing standards can be raised by focused ESL instruction, writing centers, and a stronger focus on plagiarism education.

Conclusion:

In Indian academia, English as a Second Language is essential since it is the main language used for

publication and research. However, the difficulties caused by stylistic differences, cultural rhetorical traditions, and grammatical errors restrict the international recognition of Indian academic writing. Aligning academic writing habits with international principles is essential for worldwide scholarly acknowledgment, even though Indian English is a valid variant within the context of World Englishes.

The answer is to provide academics the skills they need to successfully navigate academic discourse, not to eradicate Indian English. The quality of academic writing in India can be greatly improved by setting up writing laboratories, incorporating ESL-focused instruction into higher education, and raising awareness of citation ethics.

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