

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS II

As per VTU Syllabus 2018  
Semester II

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# PREFACE

This book is a continuation of the textbook *Communication Skills* for the course Technical English I in the 1st semester of Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Karnataka. Having worked with that book, we hope that by now you would have gained sufficient exposure and practice in all the four basic skills of language, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in English. Since proficiency in communication skills in English is required not just for personal and social prominence but also for your professional ascendance, our endeavour in this book would be to take you to an advanced level in this language learning voyage of yours.

## About the Book

Written in consonance with the latest syllabus prescribed for the course Technical Communication II by VTU, the book attempts to cover the essentials of professional communication skills in English and helps the reader gain acquaintance with the nature, layout, style, and structure of variegated professional writings such as *reports, formal business letters, technical proposals, emails, blogs*, etc. Besides this, the book helps the learner prepare with clarity, confidence, and conviction for placement and professional growth by working on the tips provided in the chapters related to communication at workplace.

Though primarily meant to be a textbook for the undergraduate students of VTU, the book will also serve as a reference guide for working engineers, managers, scientists, teachers, trainees, administrative officers, and other professionals who need to use English communication skills as a tool of communication for their day-to-day professional needs.

## Pedagogical Features

Listed below are some pedagogical features that make this book both interesting and highly educative:

**Comprehensive text written in an interactive style** The comprehensive coverage and multiple exercises on each topic are likely to help students conceptually comprehend and put into use effective communication techniques for their growth and development in academic and professional careers. In order to keep the learners engaged, a warm and interactive style of writing has been adopted throughout the book.

**Practice-oriented approach** Each chapter contains a large number of relevant examples and exercises with solutions so that the learners not only gain conceptual clarity but also imbibe these concepts empirically.

**Focus on skill development** The book includes theoretical and comprehensive practical material focusing on all the four language skills used in both day-to-day and professional situations. All the chapters have been designed to help students bolster their competence in professional communication skills.

## Content and Coverage

The book has been divided into five modules consisting of 16 chapters.

**Unit I** contains chapters on *Indianisms, Common Errors in English, Analogies and Collocations*, and *Cloze Tests*. These chapters encourage students to explore and overcome the common areas of confusions related to their written and spoken communication in English and acquire accuracy, competence, and precision. In continuation of chapters on grammar in your textbook for the 1st semester, these chapters will further help you avoid common pitfalls of English language and augment your written and oral expression.

**Units II and III** consist of chapters on *Effective Reading Skills and Comprehension, Paragraph Writing, Art of Condensation*, and *Essay Writing*. These chapters aim at helping students consolidate their basic language and communication skills in English.

**Unit IV** begins with chapters on *Email and Blog Writing* and *Résumé/CV Preparation*, which have been included to facilitate the learner's entry and growth into the professional world. Further on, the chapters on *Group Discussions* and *Job Interviews* endeavour to help students prepare for interviews with clarity and conviction.

**Unit V** concludes the book with four chapters on communication skills required at the workplace. The book here focuses on developing professional writing skills through chapters on *Nature and Style of Effective Professional Writing, Formal Business Letters, Technical Report Writing*, and *Technical Proposals*.

## Acknowledgements

Writing this book has been an arduous as well as exciting job. It demanded from us a great deal of research, punctuality, hard work, and commitment. All this required a lot of motivation and professional efficacy which always came from our publishers, Oxford University Press India.

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This textbook would not have been possible without the invaluable inputs from many of our fellow creative intellectuals. In this category, we are indeed grateful to Prof. Krishna Mohan, Prof. Meenakshi Raman, Prof. Sangeeta Sharma, Prof. Binod Mishra, Prof. G.S. Chauhan, Prof. Devika, Prof. S.K. Chaudhary, Prof. Geetha, B., Dr Sushila Rathore, Dr Virender Singh Nirban, Prof. Sanjay Arora, Prof. Rajneesh Arora, Prof. Umed Singh, Prof. Sanjeev Kumar, Dr Satyapaul, and Dr Suman Luhach.

In addition, we thank all our seniors, well-wishers, family members, and friends whose silent but invaluable support we might have failed in appreciating.

Finally, we are grateful to our readers whose interest in our book gives us great deal of motivation and satisfaction. Being teachers, we are aware of the fact that in all learning tasks, the learner's participation is of utmost importance. You can ensure your participation and learning by attempting all the exercises in the book conscientiously. We'd be delighted to receive your comments, queries, and suggestions for future editions. We can be reached at drarorasanjay@gmail.com.

**Sanjay Kumar  
Pushp Lata**

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# 1

## UNIT I: COMMUNICATION FOR ACCURACY

### INDIANISMS

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to understand

- what is meant by Indianisms in terms of the English language
- some of the commonly used expressions in Indian English
- errors commonly made by a large number of Indians while speaking and writing English
- how to avoid the commonly employed incorrect Indian English usages and prefer the standard English usage instead

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since English is not our native language, it is not easy for us to attain the level of accuracy and comfort that comes with the luxury of using a mother tongue. In fact, there are a large number of expressions, words, phrases, and other linguistic structures commonly employed by the Indian speakers and writers of English, which are not in consonance with standard English used by the native speakers and writers of English. We generally fail to differentiate between the non-standard and standard English usage. Moreover, since a large number of people talk or write erroneously in a particular way, it gains currency over the years and is never noticed for it being anomalous to standard English usage. However, when it comes to interacting with native speakers, such errors not only confuse the native users of English, but also bring into question our credibility as proficient users of English.

The following section lists some commonly used erroneous words, expressions, phrases, and other linguistic structures and their standard English usage. Instead of using the Indian variant, try to prefer the standard English usage for the following:

Indian English	Standard English Usage
<b>By walk</b> Many of us say something like 'These days I am going to office <i>by walk</i> .' The standard English usage would suggest that we say: 'These days I am going to office on foot'.	<b>On foot</b>
<b>Dickey</b> Quite commonly, we come across people telling each other: 'Don't go for this car; it has a very small <i>dickey</i> '. Now, the word <i>dickey</i> in standard English does not exist in this sense. The proper word for this is <i>boot</i> or <i>trunk</i> . So, the correct expression is 'Don't go for this car, it has a small <i>boot</i> '.	<b>Boot</b>

(Contd)

Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Hail from</b> Once <i>hail from</i> was a common replacement for <i>belong to</i> and <i>come from</i>. It is no longer in use and we should instead say, 'I come from/belong to Rajasthan,' rather than telling someone something like 'Don't you know, I hail from Rajasthan.' Such an expression is now obsolete.</p>	<p><b>Belong to</b></p>
<p><b>Cut jokes</b> It is very common for us to hear something like 'Siddhu knows how to cut witty jokes.' Now, jokes are not <i>cut</i>, they are <i>cracked</i> or <i>told</i>. Therefore, it is more appropriate to say: 'Siddhu knows how to crack jokes.'</p>	<p><b>Crack jokes</b></p>
<p><b>Good name</b> It is customary for most of us to make our question polite in some such way: 'What is your good name?' However, the expression 'good name' seems culture specific as in our country, everyone has two names—one good/formal and the other informal one, something that does not happen all over the world. Therefore, it is enough to say—'What is your name?'</p>	<p><b>Name</b></p>
<p><b>Tight slap</b> 'I will give you a <i>tight slap</i> on your cheek, if you say that again.' This is a very common way to admonish someone, especially children. A native speaker is more likely to say—I will give you a hard slap on your face.</p>	<p><b>Hard slap</b></p>
<p><b>Marriage</b> Most of us in India firmly believe in adages like '<i>Marriages</i> are made in heaven'. Supposing, we change it to '<i>Weddings</i> are made in heaven', won't there be some eyebrows raised in protest? Certainly, there would be quite a few. But there are not any for sure when somebody invites you to the <i>marriage</i> of their son. Now just as <i>marriage</i> refers to the relationship between a husband and wife, <i>wedding</i> refers to the ceremony that solemnizes this relationship. Therefore, the standard English user is required to stick to <i>wedding</i> in place of <i>marriage</i> when the reference is to the ceremony. Therefore, instead of saying, 'Please do come to the <i>marriage</i> of my brother', we should say, 'Please do come to my brother's <i>wedding</i>.'</p>	<p><b>Wedding</b></p>
<p><b>Get down</b> Consider a sentence like 'He fell while <i>getting down</i> from the horse.' In standard English usage the expression <i>getting off</i> is likely to be preferred to <i>getting down</i>. Similarly, 'I am going to <i>get down</i> at the next station,' needs to be modified as 'I am going to <i>get off</i> at the next station'.</p>	<p><b>Get off</b></p>
<p><b>On/Off the light before one moves out</b> Very commonly, we come across a sentence like 'Off the light before you move out of the room'. A sentence like this is likely to sound confusing to a native speaker as <i>off</i> cannot be used as a verb in standard English. Therefore, we are required to use a proper verb such as <i>turn off</i> or <i>switch off</i> instead of just <i>off</i>. Moreover, the expression <i>move out</i> suggests permanently vacating a house, etc. Hence, it would be more appropriate to say, 'Turn off the light before you leave the room.'</p>	<p><b>Turn on/off the light before leaving the room</b></p>

(Contd)

Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Co-brother/Co-sister</b> The native speaker of English will have difficulty in figuring out the meaning of a bizarre expression like 'Muthuswamy was bad as a brother, but worse as a co-brother'. The expression <i>co-brother</i> is very commonly used in South India whereas its counterpart <i>co-sister</i> is quite frequently used in some other parts of the country as well. Co-brother is used to refer to the husband of someone's wife's sister. Similarly, co-sister stands for the wife of someone's husband's brother. In standard English usage such relations are yet to be specified with these connotations and therefore they stick to the standard <i>brother-in-law</i> and <i>sister-in-law</i> arrangement. Therefore, rather than telling someone, 'Meet my co-brother, he lives in Mumbai', say 'Meet my brother-in-law, he lives in Mumbai'.</p>	<p><b>Brother-in-law/Sister-in-law</b></p>
<p><b>Bio-data and jack</b> Quite commonly, you hear someone speaking loudly on the mobile—'Just send me your biodata and I will use the jack to get you this job!' Most native speakers of English are likely to cut a sorry figure when they are required to understand an expression like this. Obviously, the word 'jack' seems quite crude and far too literal to make its way into the proper English structure in this sense. Also, the word <i>biodata</i> is not all that well known to a native speaker who sticks either to <i>curriculum vitae</i> or <i>résumé</i>. So, instead of saying, 'He got the job not because of his biodata but because of the jack', say 'He got the job not on the strength of his résumé but because of the approach.'</p>	<p><b>Résumé and approach</b></p>
<p><b>Purchase</b> Indian users of English do not create a proper distinction between <i>purchase</i> and <i>buy</i>. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear something like 'I am going to purchase two breads.' The native speaker, if he/she happens to hear this sentence, is likely to only smile indulgently. Actually, <i>purchase</i> is used for some elaborate and formal type of buying or for buying something very expensive. Therefore, the word <i>purchase</i> should give way to <i>buy</i> in the above context. Moreover, <i>two breads</i> should be replaced either with <i>two slices of bread</i> or <i>two loaves of bread</i>, as the sense requires. Therefore, the better way to say this would be 'I am going to buy two loaves of bread.'</p>	<p><b>Buy</b></p>
<p><b>On somebody's face</b> In Indian English, we get to hear a sentence like 'I told him on his face that it was a dirty joke'. Similarly, an expression like 'When I cracked the joke, it brought a smile on his face' is also not so uncommon. In standard English usage however, <i>to his/my face</i> is preferred. Therefore, it is better to say 'When I cracked the joke, it brought a smile to his face.'</p>	<p><b>To somebody's face</b></p>
<p><b>Time is over</b> Have you not heard an announcement like 'Stop writing; time is over'? In standard English usage, the common expression is <i>time is up</i>. Similarly, when we run short of a grocery item, the correct expression is ...<i>run out of something</i>, and not that <i>it is over</i>. Therefore, the correct expression is 'Stop writing! Time is up!'</p>	<p><b>Time is up</b></p>

(Contd)

Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Lesson is delivered</b> By saying 'I have delivered the lesson to the child; now he has to revise it,' some happy tutor could be suggesting that she has finished her job. In standard English <i>delivered</i>, apart from 'delivering babies', is used with <i>speech</i> and <i>lecture</i> and <i>talk</i>, and not with 'lesson' which is just <i>given</i>. Therefore, the correct expression is 'I have given the lesson to the child; now he has to revise it.'</p>	<p><b>Lesson is given</b></p>
<p><b>Cannot engage one's period today</b> In Indian English, we often hear from our teachers who tell us, 'I am sorry, I will not be able to engage my class today.' In standard English, the expression <i>engage the class</i> actually connotes the idea that someone is engaging the class as a replacement for someone else. For example, a teacher of Fine Arts in Indian schools may be asked to engage the students of class IX when their regular Science teacher has not turned up. So, following standard English, stick to <i>taking the class</i> rather than <i>engaging the class</i>.</p>	<p><b>Cannot take my class</b></p>
<p><b>Pin drop silence</b> Many speakers have been appreciated in Indian English as when they spoke '...there was a pin-drop silence.' A native speaker is more likely to stick to something like ...<i>there was perfect silence</i>, or <i>complete silence</i>.</p>	<p><b>Perfect/complete silence</b></p>
<p><b>Yesterday evening</b> Most of us experience guilt/embarrassment while saying 'I saw him yesterday evening.' Now, it is fine to say <i>yesterday morning</i>, or <i>yesterday afternoon</i>, but saying <i>yesterday evening</i>, or <i>yesterday night</i> is simply far too much, obviously because you cannot refer to a division of time by putting <i>day</i> with <i>evening</i> and <i>night</i>. Therefore, it is appropriate to say—'I saw him last evening/last night.'</p>	<p><b>Last evening</b></p>
<p><b>Footpath</b> We never question a statement like 'Road for vehicles while <i>footpath</i> for pedestrians.' In standard English, the word that is chosen to denote a 'footpath' is <i>pavement</i>.</p>	<p><b>Road for vehicles and pavement for pedestrians</b></p>
<p><b>Expire</b> None of us wants to be dead. Likewise, when someone is actually dead, we cannot dodge death just by not saying that 'Mr Sadajeevan Ram is dead.' It's fine as long as we say, 'Mr Sadajeevn Ram is no more,' or 'Mr Sadajeevan Ram has passed away.' But the moment we start saying, 'Mr Sadajeevan Ram has expired,' it is likely to create only a comic effect no matter how mournful you sound while admitting this. It is so because in standard English usage the term 'expire' is used to suggest the ending of a term or period by which some of the items like medicines and food items are required to be consumed or utilized. Therefore, say 'He has passed away, or 'He is <i>no more</i>', rather than saying 'He has <i>expired</i>.'</p>	<p><b>Pass away</b></p>

(Contd)

## Indian English

## Standard English Usage

**Demise**

As suggested earlier, most of us are keen to look for a rosy replacement or euphemism for unpleasant expressions which seem blatantly crude and impolite. Particularly when related to someone being dead, we are quite keen to suggest that someone has just *passed away*, or *expired*. Similarly, while reporting someone's death, we also use an expression like 'Ever since our father's demise, the business has not prospered as desired.' Now, in standard English *demise* is hardly in practice as it is considered rather obsolete. So, a standard way of saying that is 'Ever since our father's death, the business has not prospered as desired.'

**Death****Carrying**

It is understandable that someone's death needs some euphemism on the part of the speaker so that he/she can express this without being rude. But there appears to be no reason—at least to a native speaker—when we avoid something like 'My sister is pregnant', and start replacing it with 'My sister is carrying'. Now, structurally the verb *carrying* is required to be followed by some object and though it is acceptable to say—'My sister is carrying a baby', with possible connotations that she is already a mother and is carrying her baby, it is certainly more appropriate to say 'My sister is pregnant.'

**Pregnant****Better half**

People proudly introduce their wives saying, 'Meet my better half...'. The expression in standard English is more likely to be understood as something said in order to sound humorous. However, that may not be the intention of many of the Indian husbands who hardly find anything humorous in their married life. Therefore, the more fanciful *better half* had better be replaced with something more standard such as 'Meet my wife'.

**Wife****Mrs**

A simple enquiry like 'What is your Mrs doing these days?' is not likely to raise any eyebrows when both the speaker and the listener are Indians. It is so because in Indian English parlance, *Mrs* is a direct replacement for *wife*, something that is not the case in standard English, where *Mrs* is strictly regarded as a title and is not used as a name itself. Therefore, it is fine to say—'She is Mrs Chaudhary...', or 'Mrs Bansal, why are you so upset?', etc. But not something like 'Where is your Mrs?' The proper structure in standard English would be 'Where is your wife?'

**Wife/Spouse**

Calling Somebody's Wife Mrs is not Humorous

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Madam</b> It seems that Indian English consistently tries to avoid a seemingly unthreatening word like <i>wife</i>. So, quite often you get to face a question like 'Where is Madam? Why have you not brought her?' Probably it is just an expression of someone's position at home, but the native users of English are certainly likely to find themselves somewhat bemused, for they would naturally expect 'madam' to be followed by some proper noun. Therefore, on formal occasions, 'Where is your Madam' should be replaced by a standard usage, for example, 'Where is your wife?'</p>	<p><b>Wife</b></p>
<p><b>Receive</b> 'I am going to the bus stand to receive my wife.' When a British or American wife is going to listen to such an effusive sense of welcome with which someone is likely to <i>receive</i> their wife, she is bound to feel envious of her Indian counterpart. It is so because when you <i>receive</i> someone, you have garlands ready and you are giving someone a rousing and formal welcome. Therefore, in a less hyperbolic and realistic situation, you are only going to <i>meet and bring home</i> your wife.</p>	<p><b>Meet and bring home</b></p>
<p><b>See somebody at five fifteen</b> Some of us are very sloppy when it comes to suggesting what time of the day/night it is. So, we often end up saying something like 'See you at five fifteen!' A native speaker of English, however, is more likely to stick to the formal expressions like 'See you at quarter past five,' or 'The train is going to leave at quarter to six', or 'The meeting will resume at half past ten,' etc.</p>	<p><b>See somebody at quarter past five</b></p>
<p><b>OK</b> In Indian English, the expression <i>OK</i> serves various different purposes. It stands for the traditional 'all correct' suggesting that the listener has agreed to the speaker's proposition. For instance, 'Shall we dine out today?' may be answered with an <i>OK</i>. This suggests the approval of the listener. However, very frequently, particularly when a telephonic conversation is going on, the expression <i>OK</i> replaces the more appropriate <i>Yes</i>. For example, to the statement 'When I reached the bus stand, I missed my bus', the listener can very innocuously add his/her <i>OK</i> as a way of response which actually suggests, 'Carry on, I am listening.'</p>	<p><b>Right/tell me</b></p>
<p><b>How do you do?</b> Indian speakers of English do not mind exchanging their pleasantries with this particular expression even if they have met the same person many times earlier. In standard English, 'How do you do?' is used when you meet the person for the first time. In the subsequent meetings, it is more appropriate to say 'How are you?'</p>	<p><b>How are you?</b></p>
<p><b>Between ... to</b> Quite often, you hear a receptionist telling you that 'The—office remains closed for lunch between 1.00 to 2.30 p.m.' In standard English usage, the correct form is likely to be either 'between 1.00 and 2.30 p.m.', or 'from 1.00 to 2.30 p.m.'</p>	<p><b>Between ... and/from ... to</b></p>

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Reach to the station/Telling to you</b>            In India, we often get to hear statements such as ‘Don’t worry; I’m reaching to the railway station within two minutes...’, ‘He was repeatedly telling to me...’, etc. In standard English usage however, the verbs such as <i>reach</i> and <i>tell</i> are not followed by the preposition <i>to</i>. So, suffice it is to say ‘I am reaching the railway station...’, ‘He was repeatedly telling me...’, etc.</p>	<p><b>Reach the station/Telling you</b></p>
<p><b>August audience</b>            Time and again, we listen to speakers going up the dais and beginning their speech by addressing the audience with an apparently unctuous remark such as ‘...I am so delighted to be addressing an august audience like this...’ Of course, the speaker is trying to suggest to the audience that they are quite knowledgeable and respected—just like the respected critics and connoisseurs of the Augustan age. However, before we start using such an expression, we must understand that in modern standard English, the expression is regarded as somewhat hackneyed and clichéd.</p>	<p><b>Special/Distinguished gathering</b></p>
<p><b>Colony</b>            In Indian English, it is quite common to say something like ‘Our colony is truly Indian in letter and spirit! We have people from different professions, languages, and religions residing in the same colony.’ In standard English, the word <i>colony</i> refers to a locality where people involved in the same profession or with similar backgrounds are grouped together in a neighbourhood with each other. So, we have <i>the doctor’s colony</i>, <i>the teacher’s colony</i>, etc. In order to communicate the sense intended above, the word <i>colony</i> gives way to <i>locality</i> or <i>neighbourhood</i> or <i>residential area</i>.</p>	<p><b>Locality/Residential area</b></p>
<p><b>Hotel</b>            The kids are feeling hungry! Why don’t you stop at some hotel?’ could be a very common expression in Indian English. It is so because in Indian English <i>hotel</i> is used for a place where one can just eat and not necessarily stay. In standard English, however, <i>hotel</i> is a place where you also stay besides taking your food. Therefore, the more appropriate replacement for <i>hotel</i> in this context should be <i>restaurant</i>.</p>	<p><b>Restaurant</b></p>
<p><b>Wheatish</b>            ‘Wanted a good natured, educated, well-settled boy for a homely, beautiful, educated girl with a wheatish complexion...’ Such advertisements are abundantly seen in advertisements seeking matrimonial alliances. The phrase <i>wheatish complexion</i> suggests someone’s complexion that is <i>not dark</i>. Therefore, prefer using the phrase <i>on the fairer side</i> instead of <i>wheatish</i> to describe someone’s complexion.</p>	<p><b>Fair</b></p>

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Innocently divorced</b></p> <p>In Indian English coinage, <i>innocently divorced</i> is used to describe a bride who gets divorced even before her marriage is properly consummated. The concept of innocence stems from a conventional Indian marriage where sometimes the bride is sent to the husband's house months/years after her marriage. It used be only after the ritual, known as <i>gauna</i> in some parts of the country, that the girl was considered married in the real sense and before that her marriage was not really 'consummated'. Before that consummation, she was deigned to be innocent. The phrase <i>innocently divorced</i> still lurks much like the practice itself which is still in existence in parts of the country.</p>	<p><b>Divorced</b></p>
<p><b>To eat somebody's salt</b></p> <p>'Sir, I have eaten your salt! How can I go against you?'—The moment an Indian speaker speaks these words to a native speaker, ostensibly of course to suggest his/her unfailing commitment to the latter, the native speaker is most likely to blink. It is so because <i>eating someone's salt</i> has a quintessential cultural tinge to it which refuses to sound universally comprehensible. The idea is that someone is trying to convince the listener that they <i>cannot betray them for they owe them a lot</i>.</p>	<p><b>To owe somebody so much that they cannot be betrayed</b></p>  <p>Literal Translations of Indian Proverbs Sound Funny</p>
<p><b>Lose somebody</b></p> <p>'Ladies and gentlemen, I have lost my son. If you see him anywhere, please let me know immediately.' A dramatic appeal like this is most likely to toss the audience comprising native listeners into serious bewilderment. The first part of the information—'... I have lost my son!'—is surely going to evoke feelings of shock and sympathy for the speaker as <i>losing the son</i> connotes the death of the son. Therefore, the second part '... If you see him anywhere, please let me know immediately' is certainly going to befuddle the native speaker for he/she knows quite well that <i>seeing somewhere</i> someone who is already dead is really impossible.</p>	<p><b>Not to be found anywhere; somebody has gone missing!</b></p>
<p><b>To keep firing somebody all the time</b></p> <p>'My boss is very rude. Repeatedly we get firing from him.' 'You don't know my boss; he keeps firing us everyday.' It would really be nice if a native user of English keeps away from a learned conversation like this. It is so because nobody can really keep firing someone everyday, for <i>firing</i> someone essentially means 'dismissing them from a job/employment'. However, the way it is sometimes used in Indian English suggests that someone is so rude that he/she keeps yelling at you.</p>	<p><b>To keep yelling at someone all the time</b></p>

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>To put up</b> When you are <i>put up</i> somewhere, it refers to the hotel where you are lodging during a short stay. However, many of the Indian speakers, in asking ‘Where are you put up?’, actually try to find out from the listener where he/she lives. A native speaker in seeking such an information is more likely to ask ‘Where do you live?’</p>	<p><b>To live</b></p>
<p><b>Tell me</b> ‘Is this Madam Slambang speaking?’ ‘Yeah, tell me?’ A very commonly heard <i>tell me</i> is supposed to be offered in Indian English as a worthy replacement for the more sophisticated and polite ‘...how can I help you?’ A native speaker of English is more likely to take offense while being greeted like that over the phone.</p>	<p><b>How can I help you?</b></p>
<p><b>Shifting one’s house</b> ‘Sorry, we can’t come to your place at least for a week or so. You know, we are shifting our house!’ Wondering at the gargantuan might of the speaker, the listener—if he/she is a native speaker of English—is more likely to curse themselves for not being able to do what the speaker on the other side can so effortlessly perform. It is so because the native speaker is likely to say that they would only be <i>moving to a new house/place</i> something nowhere comparable to <i>shifting the house</i>, for if you are really able to <i>shift your house</i>, you have moved it or changed its position from one place or position to another.</p>	<p><b>Changing one’s house</b></p>
<p><b>Come to one’s senses</b> ‘You don’t know how dreadful it was! I lay there unconscious for seven weeks. And when I came to my senses, everything was over.’ It looks like someone’s tragic tale. The tragedy though is not just human but also linguistic. It is so because in this context <i>came to my senses</i> replaces <i>regained consciousness</i>. In standard English, however, when someone <i>comes to their senses</i>, he/she starts behaving sensibly and the corollary unmistakably is that he/she had not been doing that at least for some time.</p>	<p><b>Regain consciousness</b></p>
<p><b>Itself/Only</b> ‘The marriage is going to take place at our home itself/only.’ The announcement made in Indian English is likely to sound quite odd to the native speaker of English. In the first place, he/she would like <i>marriage</i> to be replaced by <i>wedding</i> and then there is no <i>itself</i> or <i>only</i> required, written or spoken, to imply the sense of extra insistence. A native speaker is more likely to introduce an inversion in the structure of the sentence to secure emphasis and is probably going to speak or write something like ‘It is at our home that the wedding would take place.’</p>	<p><b>Inversion used for emphasis or insistence</b></p>
<p><b>Too good</b> ‘The movie is too good! You must go and watch it.’ This expression suggests that Indian English does not differentiate the good from the bad. To suggest that something is <i>too good</i> is an example of bad collocations because <i>too</i> normally emphasizes something bad in standard English. Therefore, the idea can be better expressed by saying ‘The movie is really good! You must go and watch it.’</p>	<p><b>Really/very good</b></p>

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Even</b>            'I liked the movie very much.'            'Even I.'            This seemingly innocuous support to your friend's likings can offend him/her if he/she is aware of the nuances of <i>even I</i>. In the context cited above, the use of <i>even I</i> suggests '...it is fine you liked it, even I (what to talk of you, even someone as good or great as I) too liked it!' You now understand how offending it might be to your listener. Therefore, in standard English usage, the response is more likely to be 'So did I. 'Look at the following sentences and see the standard English replies: 'We can win the championship.' 'So can we.' 'I never enjoyed grammar.' 'Nor did I.'</p>	<p><b>So do/did I</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b>            'How many issues do you have?'            'Many. But none that we can resolve.'            In the question, <i>issues</i> stands for <i>children</i> and in the reply it refers to <i>differences</i>. It is so because in standard English, <i>issue</i> is rarely used to mean <i>child</i> unless the question relates to the legal inheritance. Therefore, it is much more appropriate to keep it simple—'How many children do you have?'—especially when you interact with a native speaker of English.</p>	<p><b>Children</b></p>
<p><b>Timepass</b>            'How was the movie?'            'Just timepass!'            The expression <i>timepass</i> is used quite frequently in Indian English in order to suggest that something was ordinary and not as good as it was expected to be. In standard English, the more likely expression would be 'It was just an ordinary movie...' or 'It just turned out to be an average movie...', etc.</p>	<p><b>Average</b></p>
<p><b>Give an exam</b>            'Stop watching television! You have to give an exam tomorrow.'            A whole lot of English speaking Indian mothers have admonished their kids thus, in a language that continues to dodge them for it refuses to be translated according to the needs of their mother tongue. In standard English usage, it is the examiner who <i>gives</i> the exam/test and the student can only <i>take</i> it. Therefore, one of the more appropriate expressions would be 'You have an exam to take tomorrow.'</p>	<p><b>Take an exam</b></p>
<p><b>Guest/Visitor</b>            'When I was about to start, suddenly some guests came.' If the listener happens to be a native user of English, he/she is more likely to blink than make out as to what kept them waiting for you. It is so because in standard English, <i>guests</i> are always invited and the one that 'drops in when you are about to start' is actually a <i>visitor</i>.</p>	<p><b>Visitor</b></p>

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## Indian English

**Female**

'Why can't the females do all that a man does?' Even if you keep supporting the doctrine of *feminism*, you cannot agree to the proposition of allowing all the *females* do all that a man does. It is so because if you do, we would see a tigress driving a metro, a cow delivering a keynote address at a conference and a mare sermonizing in a church! Since all these are 'females' and not necessarily *women*, and it would be a free for all affair if we tend to use English, a foreign language, so casually. The word *female* in standard English usage is mostly used as a qualifier and denotes some noun in expressions such as female staff, female dancer, etc. Therefore, the equality between men and women can only be demanded by asking the question more appropriately as 'Why can't women do all that a man does?'

## Standard English Usage

**Woman**

Did She Mean 'Women'?

**I don't mind**

'Shall we celebrate Jatin's birthday at a five star hotel?'  
'I don't mind.'

A native speaker of English is bound to fathom some sort of reluctance or lack of enthusiasm in the respondent's reply. The expression 'I don't mind' is used to suggest that you do not have any objection to what others have proposed. Unmindful of such connotations, many Indian speakers of English are seen using 'I don't mind' to suggest something that they themselves are very keen to do. By the way, there are many other ways by which you can express your approval, such as 'Really! That would be great', 'Oh yes! Shall we?', 'Yes, by all means', 'Sure', etc.

**Sure****Mixy**

'Why don't we go for a new mixy? It creates such a din even if I use it for a minute.'

A conversation like this is fully comprehensible provided the dialogue takes places between two users of Indian English, because here the *mixer* conveniently steps into its Indianised version *mixy*.

**Mixer****Do One Thing**

Many a time we get to hear this as a beginner, particularly when the speaker is giving some instruction, and at times, many instructions and not just one!

Therefore, quite often you get to hear a suggestion such as "Do one thing, turn off your device, pack it in a neat *cartoon*, put your name on the top of it, mention the date on which your dear chapatti maker breathed its last, and then put it in a dustbin!"

**There exists no such thing as "Do one thing" in Standard English. Moreover, it is not cartoon, but carton in this context.**

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Indian English	Standard English Usage
<p><b>Kindly Revert Back</b> A very commonly observed expression in Indian English is “Kindly revert back as soon as possible.” We use it repeatedly in our emails. To begin with, <i>revert</i> actually suggests going back or returning to a former state. Therefore, in the given context, it cannot stand for ‘reply’ or ‘respond.’ Moreover, ‘revert’ should not be followed by ‘back’ whenever used in the appropriate context.</p>	<p><b>Please reply...</b></p>
<p><b>One-eyed man</b> ‘We can’t blame Chandru; he is, after all the only one-eyed man among blinds.’ Another example of a literal translation of some idea/expression into English where something as graceful as <i>a figure among ciphers</i> is amusingly reduced to <i>one-eyed man among blinds</i>.</p>	<p><b>A figure among ciphers</b></p>
<p><b>Heater</b> ‘On the heater. It’s so cold today.’ A typical expression articulated in Indian English. As discussed earlier, the word <i>turn the switch</i> is omitted and <i>on</i> is made to act as verb. Moreover, it is not certain whether the heater that is referred to is really some heater and not actually a <i>blower</i>. It is so because many Indians do not see much of a difference between a <i>heater</i> and a <i>blower</i>. A good user of English though is expected to make a distinction between these two objects.</p>	<p><b>Blower</b></p>
<p><b>Bed tea</b> ‘The British taught us bad habits! Look they taught us to take bed tea.’ A patriotic speech may sound like that. However, though the British may be accused of having taught us to <i>take tea while in bed</i>, we cannot really blame them for teaching us to take <i>bed tea</i>. It is so because for a native speaker of English, it is generally an <i>early morning tea</i>.</p>	<p><b>Early morning tea (in bed)</b></p>



### EXERCISE 1.1

Rewrite the following sentences using standard English usage:

- You missed something! The speech was too good.
- My father was born in Hyderabad only.
- The institute will remain closed between 2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.
- We had to prepone the meeting because the chairman is leaving for Mumbai next week.
- In order to help the environment, he has started going to office by walking these days.
- All the females here are requested to assemble in the conference hall.
- My co-brother has started drinking a lot these days.
- Seen after such a long time! How do you do?
- We are sorry to announce that the shopkeeper has expired.
- Why don’t you off the lights when you go somewhere?



## EXERCISE 1.2

Replace the highlighted expressions in the following sentences with those that conform to standard English usage:

1. Stop writing! Time is **over**.
2. I don't like her. **Even I don't like her**.
3. Why don't you employ some trained **bearers**?
4. We are expecting thirty more **visitors** to join us on lunch.
5. Are you planning to have any more **issues**?
6. We took our lunch **in a hotel** on the way.
7. The meeting will resume at **seven thirty** in the evening.
8. It was **a timepass** movie.
9. Prepare well; tomorrow you have a test to **give**.
10. Those indulging in **eve teasing** must be severely punished.

## ANSWER KEY

### Exercise 1.1

1. You missed something! The speech was really good.
2. It was in Hyderabad that my father was born.
3. The institute will remain closed between 2.00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m.
4. We had to advance the meeting because the chairman is leaving for Mumbai next week.
5. In order to help the environment, he has started going to office on foot these days.
6. All the women here are requested to assemble in the conference hall.
7. My brother-in-law has started drinking a lot these days.
8. Seeing you/meeting you after such a long time! How are you?
9. We are sorry to announce that the shopkeeper has passed away.
10. Why don't you turn off the lights when you go somewhere?

### Exercise 1.2

1. Stop writing! Time is **up**.
2. I don't like her. **Nor do I**.
3. Why don't you employ some trained **waiters**?
4. We are expecting thirty more **guests** to join us for lunch.
5. Are you planning to have any more **children**?
6. We took our lunch **at a restaurant** on the way.
7. The meeting will resume **half past seven** in the evening.
8. It was **an ordinary** movie.
9. Prepare well; tomorrow you have a test to **take**.
10. Those indulging in **sexual harassment** must be severely punished.