CHAPTER 4

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN INDIA
IV. Pedagogical Implications for Teaching English in India

4.1 Introductory Comments

The analysis in the preceding chapter reveals that there is a close relationship between the patterns identified in IE and the core grammar of BrE. This chapter comments on the pedagogical implications of the patterns relating to the use of the verb phrase in IE. In order to study the use of the verb phrase in IE from a pedagogical perspective, it discusses the traditional exonormative approach and the currently emerging endonormative approach to language teaching. It aims at addressing some of the important issues like the question of the teaching model in India, the notions of correctness and error, textbook production and prescription, setting examination questions and the attitudes exhibited by people in general and academicians in particular to BrE and IE. An attempt is made in this chapter to find solutions to some of the above mentioned issues. It also outlines some of the tentative proposals regarding the teaching of English in India, with particular reference to the verb phrase.
4.2 The Exonormative Approach

It is generally believed that the goal for excellence in language teaching and learning is acquiring a native-like command. Graddol (2006) points out that very often native speakers are regarded as ‘the gold standard; as final arbiter of quality and authority’ (p. 114). The exonormative approach recognizes standard BrE (or another native variety of English) as a superior variety and rejects or overlooks the systematicity and legitimacy of non-native varieties. It maintains that all non-native users of English must consider standard BrE as a norm to be upheld and a pedagogical ideal to be pursued and emulated. The followers of this approach feel that this will prevent the disintegration and diffusion of English language.

This approach emphasizes the idea that it is necessary to strive for achieving mastery over BrE in spite of several difficulties like the non-availability of resources and qualified teachers, mothertongue interference and the increasing numbers of learners in the classroom. It recognizes standard BrE as the only teaching model in India. Thus, in the framework of this approach, any deviation from the norms set by BrE is considered to be an error. Consider the following sentences.

(451) He has been teaching in this college since 1995.
(452) He teach in this college since 1995.
(453) He is teaching in this college since 1995.

Since there is no room for deviations in the exonormative approach, it considers (452) and (453) as erroneous and (451) as the only correct sentence. It has been discussed in 3.4.1 that pattern (453) is a part of the repertoire of several educated speakers of IE. This approach does not recognize pattern (453), as it violates the norms of BrE grammar.

4.3 The Endonormative Approach

This approach believes that external norms are not required. It is based on the idea that the norm can be found within a speech community itself and supports the view of Campbell et al. (1982) that ‘to work toward a native English speaker’s competence is neither necessary nor sufficient when English is to be used as an international language’ (p. 76). It assumes that different manifestations of English in different countries support the role of English as a universal language.

The endornomative approach recognizes Standard IE as suitable for all ELT purposes in the Indian context. It relies heavily on the attitudinal identification of the speakers of IE with the variety they use.
Thus, it demands respect and acceptance of IE on the part of Indian speakers of English. Mukherjee (2002) discusses a four-step procedure for the development and application of the endonormative model of IE.
This diagram reveals that first of all extensive data of IE need to be collected and analysed for giving recognition to IE as a variety of English. It shows that the standardisation of IE is possible by means of Corpus-based dictionaries and grammars. The availability of IE corpora and corpus-based dictionaries and grammars would facilitate the teaching of IE. Mukherjee (2002) comments, ‘Generally speaking, the development of an endonormative model of a localised variety of English is seen as the final stage of a diachronic change in attitude both towards the preferred norm and the local language behaviour’ (p. 64). It can be tentatively said that at present IE is passing through the second stage and preparing itself for the third stage.

The endornomative approach allows us to expand the notion of correctness to include Standard IE. Thus, within the framework of this approach, sentences (451) and (453) may be considered perfectly grammatical in Standard IE.

As English is a second language in India, teachers have to provide a lot of practice to the students to enable them to master English. Students commit different kinds of errors while learning a language and due to the limitations of time and the increasing number of students in
every classroom, it is not possible for a teacher to correct all errors simultaneously. In the past three decades a lot of research on error analysis has been carried out. It has been emphasized by different linguists that errors must be welcomed in a language classroom as errors are an evidence of the learning process itself. It is generally accepted now that immediate rectification of errors must be avoided and the teacher must motivate the learner to do ‘self-correction’. Many linguists now support the view that correcting all the errors made by students is an undesirable pedagogical strategy.

It is felt that the concept of ‘Cline of Error’ (See Gokhale, 1988) should be accepted within the framework of the endonormative approach, as it would help the teacher to set his priorities right while teaching. It can provide some valuable guidelines to the teacher about the errors that need to be corrected first and the correction of which can be postponed. A distinction also needs to be made between ‘errors to be rectified’ and ‘errors to be tolerated’ (See Gokhale, 2003). Errors that impede comprehension and deviate to a large extent from the norms of BrE could be regarded as ‘errors to be rectified’ and errors that deviate only to some extent from the norms of BrE and that do not hamper comprehension could be considered ‘errors to be tolerated’. Thus, from
this point of view (452) could be regarded as an ‘error to be rectified’ and (453) as an ‘error to be tolerated’. Trudgill and Hannah (1985) rightly comment that if deviations in IE are not so wide, ‘there is no reason to object to that variety being used in native English-speaking areas. Obviously, within... India... the margin of tolerance of deviation can be even wider’ (p. 100).

4.4 The Question of the Teaching Model in the Indian Context

The question of the teaching model has acquired immense pedagogical importance in the past few decades. As discussed in 4.2, the exonormative approach considers BrE to be the suitable model in the Indian context. Language teaching in general and ELT in particular has historically evolved around the notion of the ‘native speaker’. Rajagopalan (2004) comments, ‘It was the figure of the native speaker that invariably served as the yardstick with which to measure the adequacy of policy decision, the efficacy of methods, authenticity of materials, the learners proficiency and so on’(p. 116). Prator (1968) argues that in all second and foreign language teaching situations, a native model must be followed.
It seems that the expansion of English and the recognition of other varieties of English have made the question of correctness more problematic. The two ways to look at the deviant patterns of the verb phrase in IE as discussed in chapter III are as follows.

a) To correct the deviations with the help of remedial courses and aim at the native usage of English.

b) To accept the deviations as correct in the Indian variety of English.

It is felt that (b) is a better solution, as achieving mastery over BrE seems to be an unrealistic goal. The teaching model in India has been either implicitly or explicitly BrE for historical reasons. As discussed in 4.3, there is a real pragmatic need to accept the notion of Standard IE. Trudgill (1995) rightly comments, ‘To argue that English English should be used as a model because it is in some mysterious way superior to Indian English as has often been done in the past, would indeed constitute social and educational oppression as well as linguistic nonsense’ (p. 316).

Linguists like Halliday (1964), Kachru (1976b) and Strevens (1978) also hold the view that the native model must be followed in all second and foreign language teaching situations. The teacher who teaches English in India is often in a dilemma about which model should
be followed. His state of confusion is brought out by Platt et al. (1984). According to them, ‘The teacher knows that the New English exists, because he or she uses it. However, the teacher is often told by the authorities that, it must not exist... and that it is his or her fault that it is still there’ (p. 161).

It seems that the goal set in the endonormative approach i.e. teaching IE to the students is certainly attainable and so it is felt that IE should be used as a teaching model in the Indian context. The frustration of both the teachers and students can be minimised by using GIE as the model.

It seems that there should be no hesitation in adopting Standard IE as a model for all teaching-learning purposes in India. It is felt that there are several advantages in using IE as a teaching model in India, as the students are likely to enjoy the learning process to a greater extent and it would also liberate the teacher from ‘linguistic schizophrenia’ (See Kachru, 1983, p. 44). Using IE as a model would also be a sign of growing confidence in our own variety of English. Kachru (1982) rightly states, ‘The acceptance of a model depends on its users. The users must demonstrate a solidarity, identity and loyalty towards a language variety’ (p. 50).
Thus, on the basis of the above discussion it can be concluded that it is unrealistic to still wish to retain BrE as a model of instruction in the Indian context. However, at present there are some problems in using IE as a model, as comprehensive descriptions of IE are not yet available. For adopting IE as a teaching model in India, the examples in IE will have to be identified, described and established. For the process of standardization of IE to take place, the following three requirements should be fulfilled.

a) Publishing of Lexicon

b) Publishing of Grammar Books

c) Attitudinal Identification of Indians with the variety they speak

(a) and (b) are considered to be the linguistic correlates of standardization, whereas (c) is a psychological correlate of standardization. The next section comments on the attitudes of native speakers and Indians towards IE.

4.5 Attitudes towards Indian English

Attitudes play a very significant role in language growth or decay. Modiano (1999) rightly argues that ‘Identity and Intelligibility are both needed for a healthy linguistic life’ (p. 22).
Ironically, the greatest opposition to IE is from Indian speakers themselves. They do not seem to acknowledge their own variety of English, but automatically assume that the model has to come from outside. Many Indians wrongly feel that they use BrE/American English, and their view is a handicap for the development of IE as a variety of English. Kachru (1982) conducted a survey in which he observed that 66.66 per cent of the Indian teachers preferred BrE as a model, whereas only 26.66 per cent preferred IE as their model. Kachru (1982) argues that Indians themselves have not been able to accept ‘ecological validity of their nativized/local Englishes’ (p. 60). As discussed in 4.4, competence in English language is still defined in relation to the British standard. Several advertisements of spoken English courses take pride in asserting that they provide training in BrE, when the reality is that they can probably teach only IE. It is felt that Indians must develop a sense of respect for IE.

The examination is an important aspect of the whole teaching learning situation. Traditionally, in university examinations in India, sentences that are deviant from BrE are given and students are asked to correct them. For this study, some of the undergraduate and postgraduate examination papers of the University of Pune and the
undergraduate papers of The Maharashtra State Board of Technical Education were analysed. Generally patterns that are frequently used in IE, but are incorrect from BrE point of view often figure as items in the question papers and students are asked to correct them. Some of the items asked in the question ‘Identify the error and explain’ are as follows.

i) People are still remembering Princess Diana.

ii) He will like the present, isn’t it?

iii) Where you are living?

iv) Ayyappa, the farmer, is having a laptop.

v) I am in Goa since 1980.

vi) The lecture hasn’t started yet, isn’t it?

vii) It is raining heavily since 2002.

viii) Shyam asked what was my name.

Surprisingly, teachers who themselves use such sentences in their speech and writing mark these sentences as wrong when they correct the examination papers. It is felt that only the items that are unacceptable in both BrE and IE must be given in the examinations. Whatever is grammatically correct in BrE will continue to be correct in IE and in
addition to this a few other patterns that are wrong in BrE can be considered to be correct in IE.

Fortunately the attitudes of Indians towards IE have started changing in the last few decades. For example, ‘Indian Literature in English’ is now a compulsory course at the post-graduate level at the University of Pune. Acoustic Engineers from Pune have produced a series of twenty-four cassettes on Phonology. These cassettes do not expect students to approximate the BrE model, but aim at enriching students’ competence in GIE. However, greater attitudinal identification with IE would play a pivotal role in establishing IE as a distinct variety of English. Parasher (1991) rightly argues, ‘The feeling of belonging to a speech community on the part of those who speak the language matters a lot’ (p. 157).

It seems that the native speaker’s perception of English has also started changing and recognition is slowly being given to other varieties of English. For effective cross-cultural communication, the native speakers must also develop a positive attitude towards IE. Kachru (1984) argues that the native speakers of English should ‘abandon the attitude of linguistic Chauvinism and replace it with an attitude of linguistic tolerance’ (quoted in Platt et al., 1984, p. 161).
According to Kachru (1983a), in order to arrive at an attitudinal readjustment a non-native speaker must

a) dissociate English from the colonial past.

b) avoid regarding English as an evil influence leading to westernization.

c) accept the large body of English literature written by local creative writers.

d) distinguish between national and international uses of English and

e) develop an identity with the local model of English.

It is hoped that Indians would take pride in the variety of English they use and the native speakers would also be more tolerant of IE in the near future.

4.6 Intelligibility of Indian English

Over the years several scholars have expressed serious concern about the intelligibility of IE. According to Halliday et al. (1964), a variety of English is acceptable as an educational model if it meets two basic requirements. They are ‘prior use among educated people in the country, and mutual intelligibility with comparable varieties from other countries’ (p. 296). Thus, intelligibility is an important criterion in selecting a model for pedagogical purposes.
According to Strevens (1968), 'The ultimate test of effectiveness of a variety of a language is whether it meets the communicative needs of those who use it' (p. 140). The various patterns discussed in this study with reference to the verb phrase in IE fulfil the communicative needs of the Indians at an intranational level. The deviant patterns outlined in this study were discussed with the native speakers of English and they all expressed the view that there was no problem in understanding the meaning of those sentences though they themselves would not use such sentences in their own speech or writing. Thus, these patterns do not seem to hamper intelligibility at an international level as well.

It is hoped that the task of writing comprehensive descriptions of IE grammar and producing materials in the form of cassettes and books would be taken up at the earliest.

4.7 The Teaching and Testing of the Verb Phrase

On the basis of the researcher's observations and experience as a teacher of English, this section makes some brief comments on the teaching of grammar in the Indian context, with particular reference to the verb phrase.
The objective of teaching grammar at the undergraduate level is to provide remediation. It seems that in the Indian context in many cases, grammar is taught as an end in itself and not as a means to an end. The ultimate goal of the teaching of grammar should be to develop students' communicative competence. However, unfortunately grammar is exclusively taught for its own sake in the Indian context and so though students learn grammar for several years, they are unable to communicate well in English. It is felt that active steps must be taken to develop students' communicative competence as opposed to mere grammatical competence.

Generally, while teaching topics like tense, aspect, mood and voice, the teachers give rules to the students, the students mechanically learn the rules and solve grammar exercises, but they are not able to produce grammatically correct sentences in connected texts. Thus, there is a need to move from formal grammar to functional grammar in order to enrich students' communicative competence. For example, after explaining the rules of the simple present tense, the teacher can talk about its usage and ask students to speak on the topics like 'My Daily Routine' or 'My Best Friend'. The advantage in giving such topics is that students would essentially have to use the simple present tense and
such exercises would also help the teacher to understand whether the students have really mastered the rules. It is necessary to bring grammar close to students’ life. It has been observed that generally isolated sentences are given in the university question papers. It is felt that if some kind of context is provided to the students, it would lead to a better understanding of the rules of grammar. For example, students are often asked to fill in the blank with an appropriate form of the verb in a sentence like

(454) John ____ a dictionary (need).

It is felt that instead of giving an isolated sentence, it is better to provide a context as given in example (455).

(455) John did not understand the meaning of some words in a poem and so he ____ a dictionary (need).

It is felt that questions where multiple answers are possible must not be given in a grammar test. For example, in October 2006 (F.Y.B.A.) question paper of the University of Pune a question has been asked in which students have to use a suitable modal auxiliary. One of the examples given in this question is
You refer to my personal books.

The problem with a question of this kind is that several modal verbs like ‘may’, ‘can’, ‘should’, ‘must’ and ‘ought to’ fit correctly into this statement. Naturally, questions of this kind do not really test whether the students have understood the subtle differences of meaning among the modal verbs. It is felt that some reforms in the pattern of the question papers should be made in order to test students’ language comprehension.

Simplification is an essential skill in the teaching of grammar. For example, rather than using the term ‘lexical verb’, the teacher can make use of the term ‘main verb’. The teacher’s goal in an undergraduate class should not be making students familiar with the technical terminology, but to make it sure that students use language correctly and are able to communicate well. It is felt that the grammatical patterns should be introduced if possible in contrast with other patterns rather than in isolation. For example, the simple past tense and the present perfect tense can be taught simultaneously.

The teachers who teach literature must also draw students’ attention to the grammatical features in the text. For example, the teacher
can motivate students to think why the passive voice is used in a particular story. Activities of such kind would enable students to learn grammar in its true sense.

Generally students dislike the study of grammar and so the teacher must think of innovative and interesting methods of the teaching of grammar. For example, after explaining the rules of the imperative mood, the teacher can show a short film to the students in which the imperative mood is prominently used. Activities of such kind are likely to generate some enthusiasm in the class and help the teacher to sustain the students' interest in the learning process.

It is hoped that active steps would be taken by Indian teachers to make the study of grammar an enjoyable and enriching experience for their students.

4.8 The Relationship between British English and Indian English

On the basis of the discussion in 4.3, it can be concluded that the endonormative approach is much more suitable and practicable for the Indian context. However, the acceptance of this approach does not suggest that
(a) Students must be motivated to study only Indian Literature in English and the study of British Literature should not be included in the curriculum.

(b) The textbooks prescribed in colleges and universities must be rewritten in Standard IE.

It must be remembered that Standard IE is not in any opposition to Standard BrE. It has been implied in 3.5 that pedagogically, Standard BrE and Standard IE should be considered complementary to each other. Thus, the acceptance of Standard IE does not essentially mean the rejection of Standard BrE. It is felt that exposure to both Standard BrE and Standard IE is necessary. Indians must aim at achieving active proficiency in IE and passive proficiency in BrE. The advantage in maintaining this objective is that even if Indians use only (453) when they communicate, the passive knowledge of BrE would help them to interpret (451) when they converse with native speakers, watch British channels or read British textbooks.

Thus, in the current scenario when we do not have grammar books and dictionaries of IE, it is felt that the teachers should try to make changes at least at an individual level. Even if they have to use the exonormative model for classroom purposes right now, they must also
expose students to IE. This will give them greater confidence in their own emerging variety and will also pave the way for future codification.

4.9 Proposals

In the light of the discussion above, it can be said that the following changes need to be made in the Indian context.

(a) Indian teachers must develop a flexible attitude towards usage. The absolutist concept of ‘proper English’ or ‘correct English’ should be replaced by a pragmatic approach. The teachers must recognize the ‘ecological validity’ of Standard IE. They can initially passively accept sentences like ‘He has submitted the project yesterday’ or ‘My mother is working here since 1995’, if they are used by their students. This will liberate them from ‘linguistic schizophrenia’.

(b) Our notions of ‘correctness’ and ‘error’ must be revised. Teachers must develop a positive attitude towards IE and distinguish between ‘errors to be tolerated’ and ‘errors to be rectified’.

(c) There is a need to make fundamental changes in the questions asked in the question papers.

(d) Standardization of IE would involve the codification of rules. There is no comprehensive description of IE that incorporates the distinctive
features of the verb phrase. It is hoped that researchers carrying out research on different aspects of IE would come together and undertake the task of writing dictionaries and pedagogic grammars in the framework of the endonormative approach.

(e) Teachers must expose students to IE as that is the variety that they encounter in their own locale, and at the same time they should motivate them to study other varieties of English.

(f) This study calls for an overall change in the attitudes of Indians and native speakers towards IE.