ABSTRACT

The concept of Indian English (IE) has been controversial with scholars advocating for and against a distinct variety called IE. One school of thought argues for a separate variety called IE without making any regional distinctions. Others say that there is no viable variety called IE. This study takes an intermediary stand between these two opinions. Acknowledging the view that there is a unique variety called IE, the researcher tries to bring together the different sub-regional varieties under a common banner called South Indian English (SIE). In this process the researcher looks at two aspects - (a) pronunciation and (b) discourse features (conversational features).

To establish the distinct features of SIE, the researcher recorded conversations of twenty educated South Indian speakers taking four each from the states of Kerala and Karnataka and six each from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The recordings were transcribed and analysed.

Chapter I deals with the theoretical considerations of speech events, discourse analysis, the different arguments for and against IE, etc. The next consideration
is the aim and procedure of the study in Chapter II. The linguistic features found in the data are categorized in Chapter III. Chapter IV establishes the concept of South Indian English, while Chapter V describes the conversational features found in SIE. The findings of the study are summarised in Chapter VI.

The following are the important conclusions drawn from the study. There is a distinct variety called SIE because it has the following characteristic segmental features:

i. Retroflexion is a dominant trait of SIE.

ii. The distinction between [s] and [z] is not consistently maintained.

iii. Another prominent feature of SIE is that sometimes a word starting with a front vowel is prefixed by [j] and one starting with a back vowel is prefixed by [v].

iv. Palatalization is one more unique feature of SIE.

The study has also exposed the following features of conversation:

i. Substitution of words which are phonetically or semantically similar is a common feature of conversation.
ii. Pauses occur in conversation and they may or may not be filled with gap fillers like ah, this thing, I mean etc.

iii. Another noticeable feature is code-mixing.

iv. Repetition of sentences and reduplication of words is another recurring feature in conversation.

v. Parenthesis is another feature of discourse.

vi. In the course of conversation, the speaker sometimes butts in and interrupts the speaker.

vii. Variation of tempo is another factor noticed in conversation.

viii. In discourse grammar genitive pronouns, prepositions, articles and other functional words sometimes get deleted.

ix. Resumptive pronouns are sometimes observed in discourse.

x. Agreement between different parts of the sentence is sometimes missing in discourse.

xi. Discourse also features the use of double negatives and double connectives.
xii. At times substitutions like the use of adjectives for adverbs, verbs for nouns, and nouns for adjectives etc. are observed in conversation.

xiii. Sometimes the choice of vocabulary is also inappropriate.